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**'68 BEATLES V STONES**

# LONG LIVE VINYL

ISSUE 21
**DECEMBER 2018**
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**Richard Ashcroft**
"This is Columbo rides again"

**Baxter Dury**
"Avant-garde music that works"

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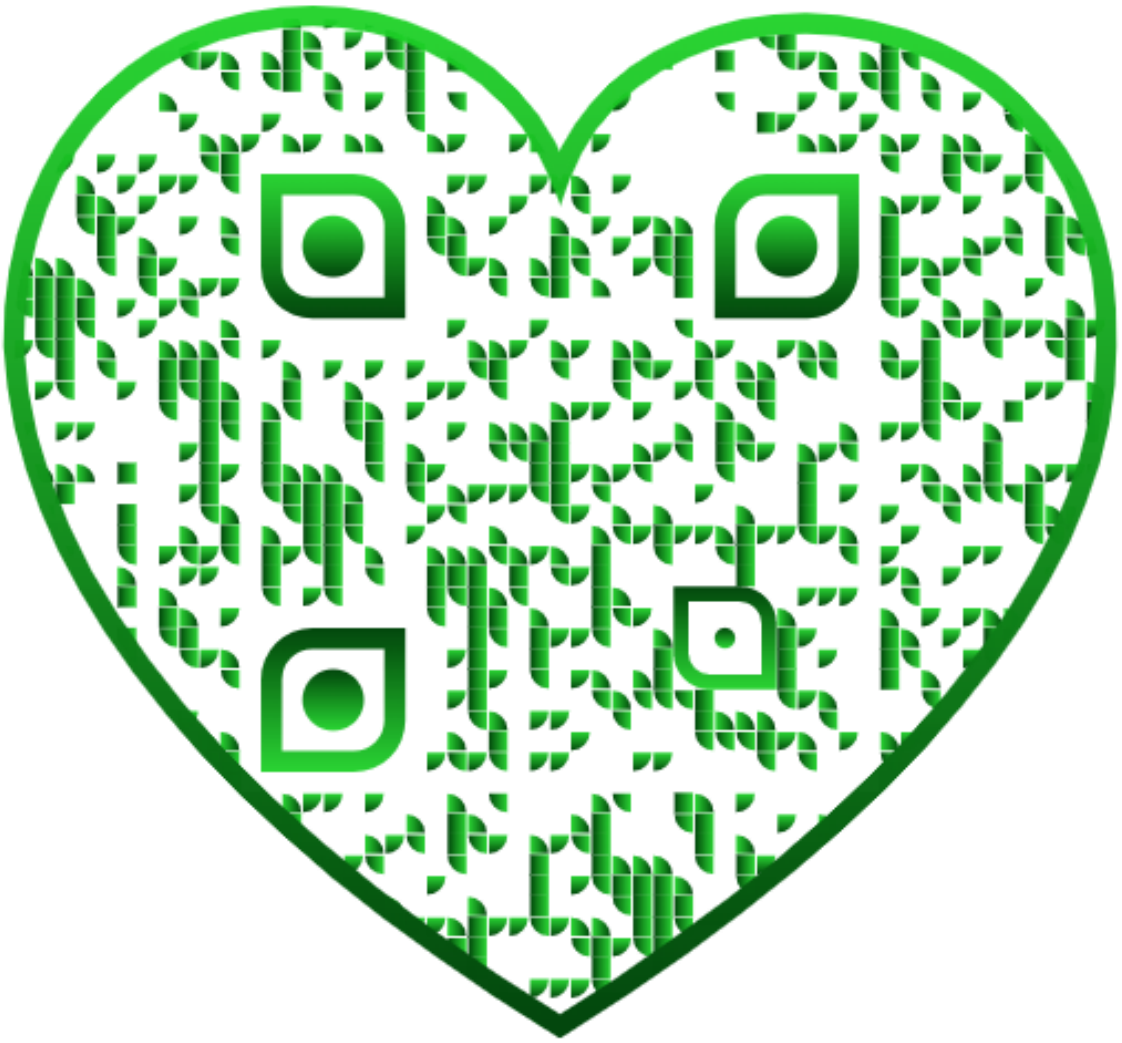

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**Richard Ashcroft**
"This is Columbo rides again"

**Baxter Dury**
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# *Beggars Banquet*

50 years on: how The Rolling Stones went back to basics on their 1968 classic

**+ Inside the new Beatles White Album Deluxe Edition**

**ESSENTIAL REVIEWS!**
The Beatles, Massive Attack, Jimi Hendrix, The Fall, David Bowie, Nile Rodgers, Thom Yorke, J Mascis, Boygenius, Bill Ryder-Jones

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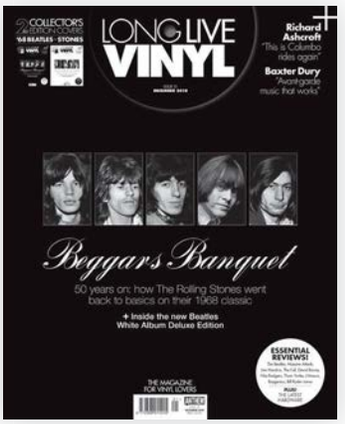



# Welcome...

It's become accepted wisdom that the making of *The Beatles*, aka The White Album, was the moment that the fractures within the band became critical – its sprawling, diverse brilliance the sum of four solo projects rather than a band working in harmony towards a collective vision. The vast new Deluxe Edition, released this month, holds within its grooves ample information to suggest that line is at least partly a red herring. Listening to the illuminating collection of largely unreleased studio outtakes reveals a playful levity that contradicts the view of a band barely on speaking terms. A debate about Marmite-flavoured crisps at the start of *Lady Madonna* dissolves into laughter, while Paul and John fool around like giggling stoned teenagers on the daft Latin-flavoured *Los Paranoias*. Also revelatory on the finally released *Esher Demos* is a remarkably torpid early take of *Helter Skelter* recorded before McCartney turned it into the white-knuckle powerhouse it became on the final album.

There are fewer revelations on the 50th Anniversary reissue of The Rolling Stones' *Beggars Banquet*, and we'll leave you to argue which is the stronger album. But, initially released just two weeks apart, the two records snapshot fascinating milestones in both bands' trajectories, as the Stones embarked on a run of records few other acts have equalled and The Beatles began the long goodbye that would culminate with the sublime *Abbey Road* and the ill-fated *Let It Be*. Our cover story gets to the heart of the bands' majestic '68 offerings as we hear from the key contributors why the new versions are essential listening. Elsewhere this issue, you won't want to miss our interviews with Richard Ashcroft and Baxter Dury, two of the most outspoken and engaging personalities in music today. We also meet Heavenly Records founder Jeff Barrett over a pint or two to discuss the records that have soundtracked his life in music and Tim Burgess, who tells us about the independent spirit that fires his O Genesis label. James Marsh talks us through his cover artwork, which helped define Talk Talk's identity; The Trip visits Liverpool and we bring you a collector's guide to the Essential records that have emerged from Laurel Canyon.

***Released two weeks apart, the two records snapshot fascinating milestones in both bands' trajectories***

Finally, this month we say goodbye to our production editor Owen Bailey, who's moving on to pastures new. Owen's worked on every issue of *Long Live Vinyl* since we launched nearly two years ago, and has been instrumental in shaping the magazine's identity. We'll miss his keen eye for detail, love of electronic music and encyclopedic knowledge of the UK's curry houses. We wish him well in his new job. Thanks for reading.

**Gary Walker** *Editor*

LONGLIVEVINYL

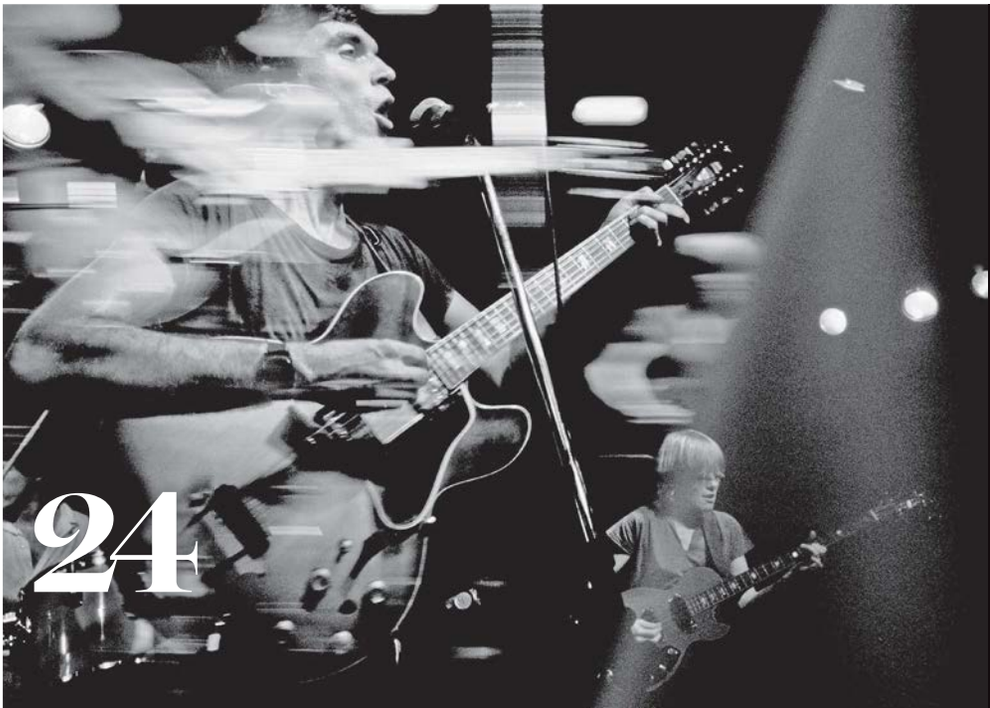
COVER FEATURE

46

68

30

36



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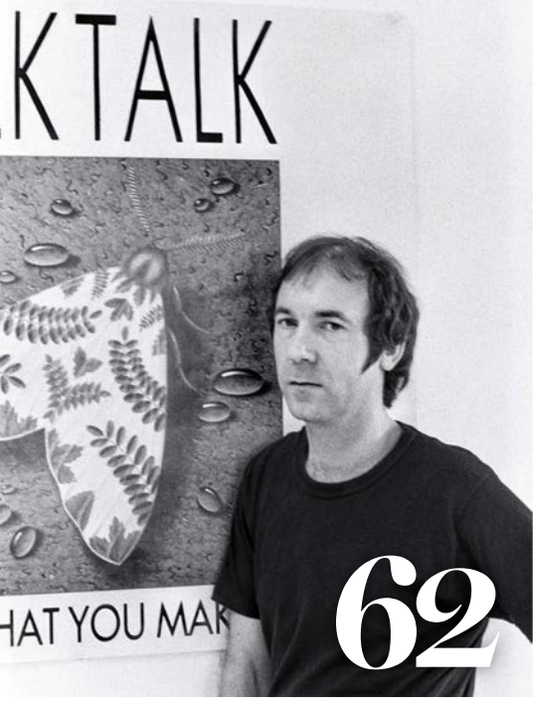

LONG LIVE VINYL

# Features

**NYC** 24
A fresh appreciation of a seismic musical period that's been curiously overlooked

**RICHARD ASHCROFT** 30
Back in stadiums and back in the charts, Dicky's on the march again

**BAXTER DURY** 36
The mockney maverick discusses his B.E.D project and his new solo album

LIFE IN VINYL
**JEFF BARRETT** 40
The Heavenly Recordings maestro on the key releases that have shaped his career

COVER STORY
**1968: THE BEATLES AND THE STONES** 46
Celebrating the 50th anniversary reissues of two key LPs from our biggest bands, as they headed in opposite directions

LABEL STORY
**O GENESIS** 56
Tim Burgess talks about running a record label that champions outsider artists

COVER STAR
**JAMES MARSH** 62
The artist whose unique graphic style gave Talk Talk their distinctive identity

CLASSIC ALBUM
**MIDNIGHT MARAUDERS** 68
An in-depth look at A Tribe Called Quest's hip-hop concept album from '93

THE ESSENTIAL
**LAUREL CANYON FOLK** 76
The must-have records from the sensitive 70s troubadours of LA's Laurel Canyon

BOOK EXTRACT
**THE VINYL REVIVAL** 84
Author Graham Jones visits Sheffield vinyl guru Barry Everard

THE TRIP
**LIVERPOOL** 88
Record hunting in the land of The La's

# News

**ON THE RECORD** 8
News, plus regular features, including:

SIMON SAYS 9
Simon Raymonde of Bella Union

STORY BEHIND THE SLEEVE 12
Spiritualized – *Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space*

LINER NOTES 16
Ian Peel

ON THE RADAR 17
Snapped Ankles

CRATE DIGGING WITH… 18
Laura Veirs

STUDIO SNAPSHOT 20
The Beatles

# Regulars

**CHOICE CUTS** 67
Bathory – *Bathory*

**DIGGING FOR VICTORY** 94
Mark O'Shaughnessy, Resolution Records

**THE BIG REISSUE** 95
Luaka Bop

**GENRE HOPPING** 107
Library music

**THE VINYLIST** 114
Barry Hassan

# Reviews

**ALBUMS**
RE-RELEASES 96
The latest re-releases and boxsets

NEW RELEASES 101
A round-up of the best new music

**GEAR**

DREAM MACHINES 108
Audio Research Reference 160M

TURNTABLES 110
NAD C 558, STST Motus II

# LONG LIVE VINYL

## The *Long Live Vinyl* team pick their favourite releases from 1968

**Gary Walker**
*Astral Weeks*

**Jonny Highett**
*The White Album*

**Owen Bailey**
*Electric Ladyland*

**Andy Cottle**
*Wheels Of Fire*

**Ian Peel**
*The Graduate OST*

## Meet our expert contributors…

**Simon Raymonde**
Simon was the bassist and keyboard player in the Cocteau Twins; he's currently in Lost Horizons. He launched the independent label Bella Union in 1997. His label has been a home to bands including Fleet Foxes, The Flaming Lips, Midlake, Father John Misty, John Grant, Explosions In The Sky and Lanterns On The Lake. He's also produced many great albums.

**John Earls**
In addition to writing about music for *Classic Pop*, *NME* and *The Daily Star*, John Earls was editor of Teletext's Planet Sound for a decade. He writes about football, spends too much time on Twitter and is delighted that his new hometown in Bedfordshire has a decent record shop. There's even a bus that goes to Luton Town's ground, so his life is essentially sorted.

**Teri Saccone**
A veteran music journalist who grew up in New York, Teri voraciously pored over album sleeves as a child, studying studio and songwriting credits. Later, she was sucked into the vortex of the music industry while still at university. A sometimes beauty and fashion writer, besides the aural wonders of vinyl, she loves the aesthetics of album design and artwork.

**Jonathan Wright**
Jonathan began writing about music in the late 80s. He's interviewed such singular talents as Shaun Ryder, Edwyn Collins and Richey Edwards. He's written for *The Guardian*, *Classic Pop* and many others. Jonathan edited *Adventure Rocketship! Let's All Go To The Science Fiction Disco*, a book of essays about the interface between geek culture and music.

**Gareth Murphy**
London-born but Dublin raised, Gareth Murphy's childhood was enlivened by his father's work in the 1970s and 80s as a pioneer concert promoter. Now based in Paris, he has produced numerous compilations and is the author of *Cowboys And Indies – The Epic History Of The Record Industry*. His collection of Seymour Stein's memoirs, *Siren Song*, is available now in all good book shops.

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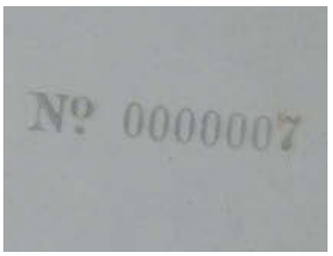


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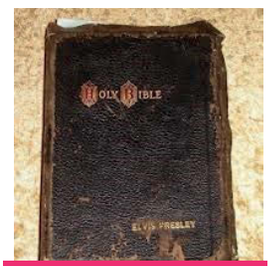


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# On the record

## ELECTRIC LADYLAND (SLIGHT RETURN)

### 50th anniversary extravaganza for Hendrix fans

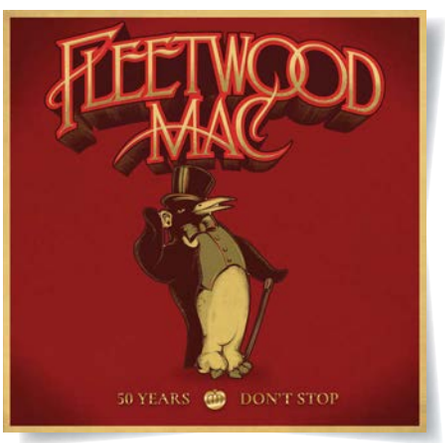
**Hot on the heels of our Issue 19 cover story, a 50th anniversary Deluxe Edition reissue of The Jimi Hendrix Experience's masterpiece *Electric Ladyland* is due to hit stores. The 6LP edition, released on 9 November by Experience Hendrix, LLC and Sony's Legacy Recordings, comprises the album, remastered by Bernie Grundman from the original tapes, plus unreleased demos and live footage.**

***Electric Ladyland: The Early Takes*** **features demos Hendrix recorded himself on a Teac reel-to-reel tape machine in early 1968, as well as sessions at Sound Center and the Record Plant in New York. Previously unreleased versions of *Angel Caterina* and *Little Miss Strange* showcase guest appearances from Buddy Miles and Stephen Stills. *Long Hot Summer Night* features Hendrix and Mitch Mitchell with Al Kooper on piano, and *At Last… The Beginning* is an early version of what would become *…And The Gods Made Love*. Jimi's demos, recorded in March 1968 while he was staying at the Drake Hotel in Manhattan, include formative takes of *Voodoo Chile* and *Gypsy Eyes*.**

**Another never-before-released element of the new edition is *Jimi Hendrix Experience: Live At The Hollywood Bowl 9/14/68*. The boxset also features a new 5.1 surround sound mix of the original album by Eddie Kramer, who says of the format: "It always felt to me as the perfect vehicle for the kind of adventuresome stuff that Jimi and I were trying to do in 1968. The visceral thrill when we completed the first surround mix of *Voodoo Child (Slight Return)* was palpable." Read our review on page 98.**

## 36

**The number of tracks on a 4LP boxset to mark the 10th anniversary of Flying Lotus' Brainfeeder label. Featuring George Clinton's first release on the label, *Brainfeeder X* is out on 16 November.**




## MAC ATTACK

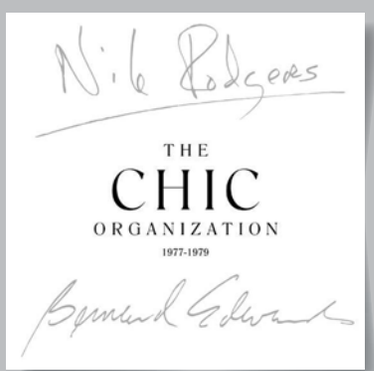
**FIRST FULL-CAREER RETROSPECTIVE FROM BAND OUT ON VINYL**

Fleetwood Mac celebrate a half-century of music with a new 50-song collection that's the first to explore the group's entire career, from their early blues material to becoming one of the world's biggest acts. *50 Years – Don't Stop* will be available as a 5LP set from Warners on 16 November. The collection also features rare photos.

## Peak Chic

### *Boxset collects first three LPs*

***The Chic Organization 1977-1979*** **is a 5CD and 6LP celebration overseen by executive producer Nile Rodgers with the approval of Bernard Edwards' estate. Released on 23 November by Atlantic/Rhino, it includes the band's first three albums: *CHIC, C'est Chic* and *Risqué*, remastered from the original Atlantic stereo tapes by Miles Showell at Abbey Road Studios. Exclusive to the vinyl version is an exact reproduction of Chic's first single, a 12" promo for *Dance, Dance, Dance (Yowsah, Yowsah, Yowsah)*. The collection also features 12" mixes and 7" edits of hits such as *Good Times*. "My life has been everything I ever hoped it could be as a result of the incredible music Bernard and I made together," says Rodgers. "It was important to me that we make these the best-sounding editions ever as a tribute to 'Nard."**




**THE LILLYWHITE ALBUM**
**Ryley Walker's new album, *The Lillywhite Sessions*, is a reimagining of a lost Dave Matthews Band album from 2001. It's out on 16 November via Dead Oceans.**

**THE GREAT UNKNOWN**
**Unknown Mortal Orchestra released a surprise instrumental album as we were going to press. It's called *IC-01 Hanoi* and is out via Jagjaguwar.**

**THIS IS FOR LOVERS**
**The latest edition of Don Letts' *Reggae* 45 podcast focuses on Lovers Rock. Reggae 45 has become one of the UK's most popular music podcasts, featuring in *The Sunday Times*' Top 50 podcasts. For information and to listen, go to turtlebay.co.uk.**

# Simon says

SIMON RAYMONDE

After showing his fancy linen in public, our columnist expands his horizons searching for new musical talent for Bella Union, leading to some enlightening cultural exchanges…

Running Bella Union for 21 years, I've been fortunate to have travelled far and wide in search of exciting new music. Following our successes globally with Jambinai from Seoul in South Korea, we have tried to expand our horizons beyond just going to the same annual festivals and instead delve into territories where the awareness is minimal. Through a connection with Indonesian festival promoter Teguh Wicaksono, I was invited to do a keynote speech at Archipelago Festival in Jakarta and to also spend a week visiting local musicians, promoters and venues, and absorbing as much of the culture as possible. It is from my hotel in Jakarta on the eve of my keynote speech and DJ set that I write these words.

Having flown straight out of snowy Helsinki – where I was at another festival last week – to Doha in Qatar and then on to the heavy humidity of Jakarta, my delicate constitution was about to be tested. The red-haired, pale-skinned of us don't tend to fare too well in extreme climates, but I have a positive mindset and as I arrived at the conveyor belt at Jakarta airport to collect my bags, despite 15 hours of travel, I felt ready for action.

When the bags started to appear, my heart sunk as I could see a super-large see-through plastic bag wrapped around my suitcase, encasing the full contents, including a velvet dinner suit (I had been invited to the Music Awards Gala in Finland and black tie was compulsory!) and a huge padded parka. On closer inspection, it seemed like the zips had broken and now all the contents were on view for the passengers' entertainment. Quite why anyone would bring a velvet suit and a parka to Indonesia was a question I could easily understand being muttered at that moment.

After this unexpected jolt to my confidence, I went through to meet Nadhira and Banted, two of my lovely hosts from the fine folks at British Council who were sponsoring my trip. The hour-or-so drive to the hotel was an early introduction to many of the problems that beset life in Indonesia, one of which is the traffic and transport. I am not a gamer, but I am a good driver and I can say without hesitation I'd never drive here! Thousands of bikes swarm around the cars and weave in and out with seemingly no care or attention.

On main roads, when bikes approach from a side road, they don't wait until there's a gap to exit, they just drive straight into the main road without slowing down. One upside is that at all the traffic lights in the city, a lone vulnerable violinist can be seen standing in the middle of the road serenading the massed ranks of revving motorbikes in front of him. A beautiful moment of balance to the chaos.

***At Bella Union, we've tried to expand our horizons beyond the same annual festivals and instead delve into new territories***

After a day of meetings, I was taken to Synchronize Festival, which is solely for Indonesian artists. About six stages were spread neatly around the site and each stage catered for a different style of music. Due to the laws governing alcohol, there is very little access to beer here and when there is, it is very expensive – but most festivals are instead sponsored by cigarette companies. Smoking is still big business here in Indonesia and consequently, almost everyone smokes. I saw some good bands and particularly loved Southern Beach Terror, a surf-punk band at times akin to The Cramps.

The following two days were spent in Bandung, which has a rich underground music scene of metal and punk that's been growing since the mid 80s. We met musicians and writers who, under the ATAP banner, are writing books chronicling every band from Bandung, starting as far back as any documentation exists. It's incredible to think no writing exists here for any music before this period. ATAP also promote local music on their website and are a true collective of musicians and fans, who want to preserve the musical history of Bandung and ensure the progress of its new artists.

Following that, we went to Keep Keep, a brilliant vinyl store and restaurant where we were to meet "a couple of local folks from the music scene". By the end of a special night sitting with over 30 people from the Bandung scene, I realised that my old band were hugely important here and that my debut solo record – which hasn't been available anywhere since 1997, physically or digitally – is highly regarded in Indonesia. Instead of sitting at a long table just talking to the person on your left and right, a microphone was passed around so everyone could introduce themselves and this developed into several hours of in-depth exchanges, where I heard their stories and they asked about mine. Great bonds were forged.

In a country of nearly 300 million, it would be strange not to find some extraordinary music here. I now have even greater reason to buy that new suitcase. I have more CDs to pack than you can imagine and when I get home, I will begin listening. ●

**SIMON RAYMONDE** ***is currently in Lost Horizons and was the bassist and keyboard player in Cocteau Twins. He founded the independent record label Bella Union***

## Discogs TRENDING CHART

**The Top 10 trending vinyl releases from the Discogs community this month**

10 ***Piano & A Microphone 1983***
Prince

9 ***Play***
Dave Grohl

8 ***Live At Third Man Records***
Father John Misty

7 ***Come On Pilgrim... It's Surfer Rosa***
Pixies

6 ***Piano & A Microphone 1983***
Prince

5 ***For The Sake Of The Song***
Townes Van Zandt

4 ***Year Of The Snitch***
Death Grips

3 ***Collapse***
Aphex Twin

2 ***Distant Sky***
Nick Cave & The Bad Seeds

1 ***Live At Third Man Records***
Jack White

## Official Vinyl Albums Chart

### AUGUST 2018

10 ***Joy As An Act Of Resistance***
Idles

9 ***Rumours***
Fleetwood Mac

8 ***My Mind Makes Noises***
Pale Waves

7 ***Chris***
Christine & The Queens

6 ***Gold***
T. Rex

5 ***Piano & A Microphone 1983***
Prince

4 ***And Nothing Hurt***
Spiritualized

3 ***The Blue Hour***
Suede

2 ***True Meanings***
Paul Weller

1 ***Collapse***
Aphex Twin

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## Work In Progress

## STEVE MASON

### *About The Light*

**Double Six** 18 January

**My new album is...** my fourth under my own name and the idea was to make a record that really represented how my life is at the moment and how it's changed from feeling depressed for so long to be lucky enough to put the work in, come out the other side and have a family of my own. I wanted to get across that sense of positivity. I've always liked the idea of redemption – you've been to the bottom but managed to claw your way back up. It's not a very cool, rock 'n' roll thing to say that I've written a very positive record, but when you've been through the shit, you don't give a flying fuck about that. As Rocky once said: "It's not about how hard you hit, it's about how hard you can get hit and keep moving forward."

**The sessions...** included my live band more than any record I've ever made. I had four or five ideas and was going to work on them on my own, but quickly threw that idea in the bin. Usually, the first time I play the songs is when we start rehearsing for the tour when the album is done, and you miss out on all these dynamics from the band. It was part of me trying to prove to myself and anyone else that was interested that I could exist outside of The Beta Band.

**I worked with...** Stephen Street. I was very lucky. He's the first producer I've worked with that I own records by. Stephen has made records that have not only sold enormous amounts, but informed huge chunks of my life. He's very strong-minded and that's what I needed, so I could concentrate on the songwriting and my performance. He was brilliant and knew exactly the sound I wanted to create. When you work with people who really know what they're doing, it's incredibly easy; they've long ago dispatched with any ego bullshit.

**I was inspired by...** wanting to push further. The two records I was inspired by were *How Does It Feel* by Slade and *Know Your Product* by The Saints. There's a quote by David Bowie: "If you're in the studio and you feel out of your comfort zone and afraid you're not doing the right thing, that's usually when you're doing the right thing."

**I used my...** band. Usually when I'm writing, it's me sitting with Pro Tools and recording every instrument. Extracting everyone's bits and bobs and the feel of everyone playing together is what's informed the sound of this record and that's where the sense of excitement it's got comes from.

**I learnt...** not to be afraid and to keep pushing. Positivity and making a positive record is not something to be afraid of, it's the opposite. If you don't make the record you want to make, then you're kind of weak, and that's not something I've ever really been.

**Touring the record...** is the thing I'm really looking forward to. Because we've already sat in the studio and played these tracks so many times, I know that it works and that's really exciting. I've got a one-year-old daughter and I took a year off to be a full-time dad, but in January, the album's out and I go back to work!

**You might be surprised to know that...**
I feel quite happy these days.

## VOTE NOW! RECORD SHOP OF THE YEAR 2018

Voting is open in our search for the UK's favourite independent record shop. As we went to press, we'd had more than 6,000 votes and competition was incredibly tight. Go to bit.ly/rsoty2018 to support your favourite shop and you could win a £100 Record Token or one of two £25 runner-up prizes. The closing date is 16 November.

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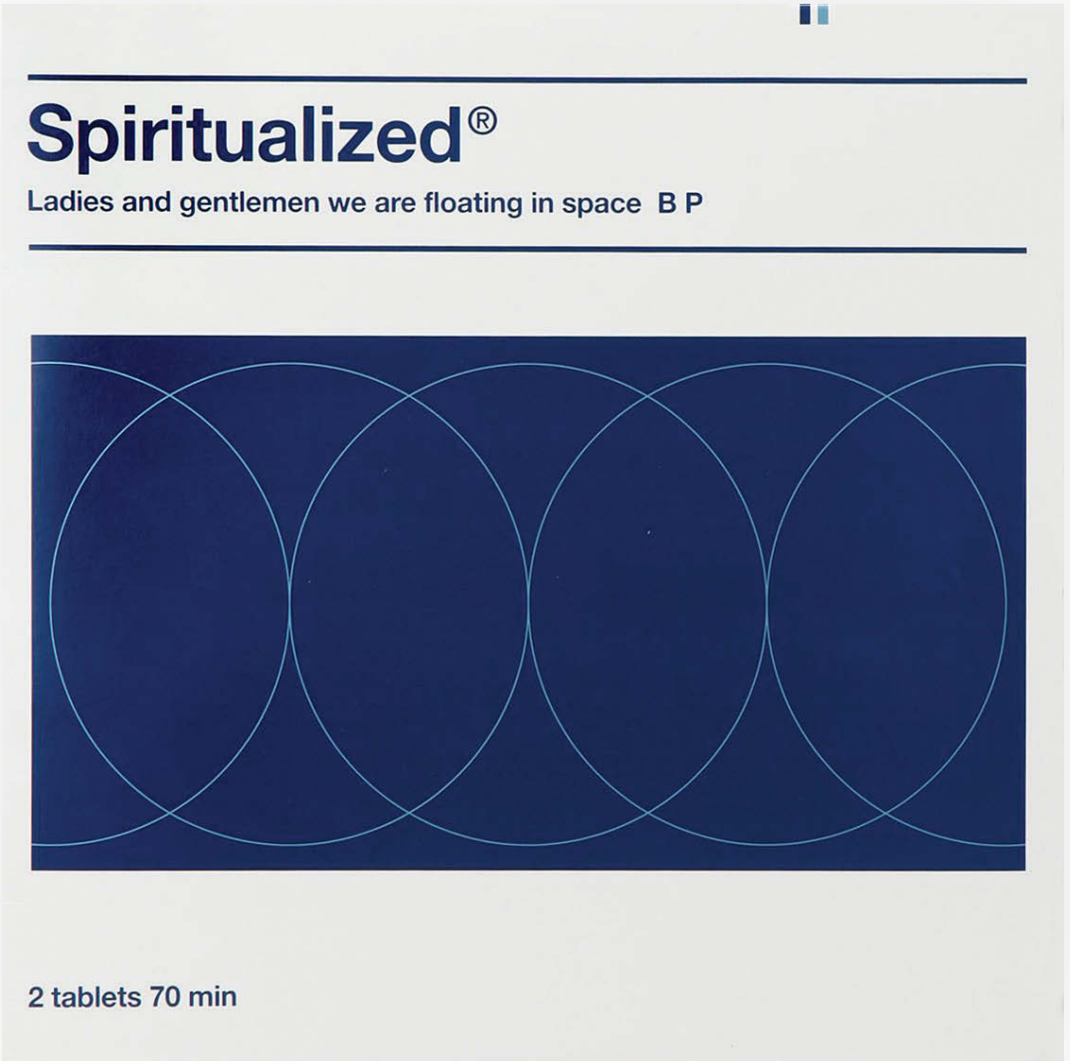





# #19 Ladies And Gentlemen We Are Floating In Space

## Spiritualized

Spiritualized main man Jason Pierce had been attracted to Mark Farrow's work with Pet Shop Boys, telling him at the first meeting for the *Ladies And Gentlemen…* cover simply, "music is medicine for the soul". That mission statement sparked Farrow's take on a tablet box to accompany a hugely ambitious album that included Dr John and The London Community Gospel Choir among its guests. Pierce is said to have cut the length of this stunningly beautiful record to 70 minutes, a round number that looked more aesthetically pleasing on the sleeve. Original pressings of the 1997 album go for three figures, and a CD edition with a blisterpack, packed 'under strict pharmaceutical conditions', containing each of the 12 tracks on a separate three-inch disc, is even more sought-after. Pierce had it written into his BMG contract that Farrow had to produce the artwork for his future covers, but despite winning numerous awards for the project, Farrow didn't feel *Ladies And Gentlemen…* warranted more attention than his other Spiritualized work, telling *Creative Review* it was "more of a pun than a pastiche, but I hate both those things".

# Now Spinning

**The 12 essential tracks on the *Long Live Vinyl* turntable while we were making this issue, plus our companion beer – Reality Based Pils, a straight-up, no-nonsense pilsner that's the result of a collaboration between Danish brewery Mikkeller and The National.**

1 ***Drink And Glide*** – Snapped Ankles **(The Leaf Label)**
**2** *Orphee* – **Blood Music** (O Genesis)
3 ***Out The Window*** – Confidence Man **(Heavenly Recordings)**
**4** *New Big Prinz* – **The Fall** (Beggars Archive)
5 ***Suspirium Finale*** – Thom Yorke **(XL Recordings)**
**6** *White Coats* – **B.E.D** (Heavenly Recordings)
7 ***Salt In The Wound*** – Boygenius **(Matador)**
**8** *Didn't It Rain?* – **Mahalia Jackson** (Charly Records)
9 ***T69 Collapse*** – Aphex Twin **(Warp)**
**10** *Give Me A Signal* – **The Prodigy** (BMG)
11 ***Cowboy Movie*** – David Crosby **(Atlantic)**
**12** *Beat Bop* – **Rammellzee, K-Rob** (Tartown)

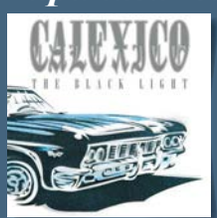
## CHRIS CORNELL BOXSET

### DELUXE 64-TRACK CELEBRATION

A new limited-edition Deluxe Edition from Universal celebrates the life of Chris Cornell. A 17-track self-titled LP, accompanied by a 64-track boxset, featuring 11 unreleased songs, is out on 16 November. It's the first posthumous Cornell release, curated by his wife Vicky, who worked with the singer-songwriter's bandmates and friends to compile material from his Soundgarden, Temple Of The Dog and Audioslave days and his solo career. The 180g 2LP edition comes in a gatefold jacket with a 12-page booklet, with a limited Super Deluxe 4CD, 1DVD and 180-gram 7LP boxset with 64 songs and 24 videos, plus a photo book, artist and photochromatic lithos, turntable mat, microfibre vinyl cleaning cloth and 36"x48" wall poster.

# Back In Black

## *Expanded reissue of Calexico's second*




**City Slang have announced the release of a 20th Anniversary double-LP reissue of Calexico's *The Black Light* on 23 November. It includes 11 bonus tracks, extensive liner notes including commentary from Joey Burns and John Convertino, and alternative artwork by Victor Gastelum. "*The Black Light* is one of my favourites, maybe even my most favourite of all our records," says Convertino. It's reviewed on page 101.**

## ALARMING NEWS

Bloc Party will release a live version of their debut album *Silent Alarm* on 22 February 2019. The album will be recorded during the band's forthcoming six-date European tour, where they will perform the album live and in full for the first time.

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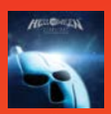

**HELLOWEEN**
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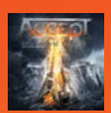
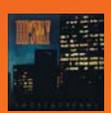
A collection of German metal band Helloween's finest albums, in multiple colours. From 1985's *Walls Of Jericho* through to *Keeper Of The Seven Keys Part I* and *Part II*, the long out-of-print 1991 double compilation *The Best The Rest The Rare* and rare non-album EP *Judas* on yellow vinyl, the set comes packaged in a two-piece side-loading box.



**ACCEPT**
SYMPHONIC TERROR
LIVE AT WACKEN 2017
**23 November**
Special three-disc vinyl boxset capturing a two-hour Accept show from 3 August 2017 at the Wacken Open Air Festival in Germany, at which the band – accompanied in part by a full symphony orchestra – played the biggest show of their career.



**HIPSWAY**
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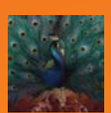
**30 November**
A first new album from Glasgow's Hipsway since 1989. Signed albums and exclusive merchandise are available, as well as the chance to attend intimate live album performances and playbacks in Glasgow and London, and opportunities to meet the band.



**OPETH**
SORCERESS
**30 November**
Limited-edition 4×10" clear vinyl boxset of 2016's *Sorceress*, including bonus studio and live tracks.

## IN THE PIPELINE

**STEVE MASON** *About The Light*, January 2019. Fourth solo album from The Beta Band founder member, produced by Stephen Street. Exclusive offers include signed white vinyl.

**GANG OF FOUR** *Happy Now*, February 2019. New studio album from Andy Gill's Gang Of Four available to pre-order now with signed vinyl and white-label test pressing available.

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**URBAN HYMNS**
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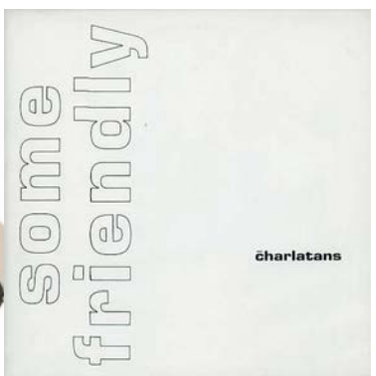


## THE CHARLATANS
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MUSIC BOX

IAN PEEL'S
# LINER NOTES

They've been the subject of court cases and inquiries into satanic subversion and were to vinyl what Easter Eggs were to DVDs. Let's take a look at the weird world of backward messages…

Listening to backward messages on vinyl is easy these days. If you hear of one embedded on a record, either in the runout groove or deep in the music itself, then you can probably go on YouTube and hear a detailed playback of the track both forwards and backwards. But when these little gems original emerged, the only way to hear them was to place your LP on the turntable and rotate the platter backwards by hand in the hope of hearing something jump out.

Like most experimental aspects of modern rock and pop, it all goes back to The Beatles, of course. In this case, the *Revolver* era – where playful attempts at backward messages, guitar solos and effects can be heard on tracks like *I'm Only Sleeping*, *Tomorrow Never Knows* and *Rain*. It's on the latter where the first hidden backward message can be heard, although both John Lennon and George Martin later claimed they each came up with the original idea. Play *Rain* backwards on your turntable, and you'll hear the refrain: "Sunshine, rain. When the rain comes, they run and hide their heads."

***Rain contains the first hidden backward message, although both John Lennon and George Martin later claimed they each came up with the original idea***

In 1995, when 'The Threetles' reconvened for the *Anthology* project and the *Free As A Bird* single, they paid homage to their missing bandmate by inserting a comment by John Lennon – "Turned out nice again!" – as a backward message into the outro.

The murky, heavy-metal world of the 'backwards satanic messages' scandal probably deserves a column or a feature entirely to itself. Judas Priest famously went to court in the US over how and why they had inserted backward messages into their music, and the alleged effects it had on fans. But Rob Halford, their lead singer, was adamant that the phrase: "In the dead of the night, love bites" coming out of the speakers when you hand-played *Love Bites* from 1984's *Defenders Of The Faith* album in reverse was simply the band trying out new techniques in the studio. "When you're composing songs, you're always looking for new ideas, new sounds," he explained.

Taking a more light-hearted approach to the idea, backward messages – or at least backward playback of lyrics and phrases – were a go-to in the fiercely experimental world of 80s 12" singles. Just about all the main producers of the day dropped this trick into extended remixes, two fine examples being the "rap boy rap!" call-out from the 12" of Thompson Twins' *Love On Your Side*, and the backward play of the title, which emerges in the Part V US dance remix of ABC's *The Look Of Love*.

Less of a message, but certainly backwards, the most extreme use of the idea I've ever come across has to be the 1966 novelty hit single by Napoleon XIV, *They're Coming To Take Me Away, Ha-Haaa!*, which went to No. 4 in the UK singles chart. They made their entire B-side a backwards playback of the A-side, even titling it *!aaaH-aH ,yawA eM ekaT oT gnimoC er'yehT!* ●

On The Radar

# SNAPPED ANKLES

## Green shoots of creativity as London innovators hone sophomore album

Emerging from London's fiercely independent warehouse venue scene and shunning the constraints of traditional live performance, Snapped Ankles delivered an arresting blast of post-punk brilliance with 2017's *Come Play The Trees*. With a restless DIY energy seeing them deploy a synth made from bits of tree at shows bearing as much in common with art installations as traditional gigs, the band distil the dynamic krautrock energy of The Fall and Can.

That fizzing creativity is audible through the insistent electronic throb of new single *Drink And Glide*, the first from an as-yet-untitled album due next year. Recorded with producer Danalogue The Conqueror from fellow Londoners The Comet Is Coming, it features "the motley cast of Snapped Ankles, drummers, gurus, chemists and witch doctors".

"Basically, it's a call out to the new corporate mindfulness, in the manner of a shopping-channel advert," explains the band's singer Mr Austin. "The song started with the idea that the 60s counterculture has been co-opted by health and wellness industries, and it was inspired by a poem Graham Bendel wrote entitled *Timothy Leary Is Teaching Weight Watchers Classes In Crouch End*."

Saying he loves The Fall because they "were all about really primitive music with good lyrics", Mr Austin tells *Long Live Vinyl* that the DIY ethic extends to the band's infamous log synth, a "rotten old stick with a vintage percussion synth circuit embedded or attached to it".

"They are as robust as a guitar and can take the beatings of drums – it's all the things you can't do with traditional or even modern synths. They came for an installation we created where we made a small 'forest' of trees infected by man-made electronics, and they are notoriously difficult to control. Much like theremins, they are almost untunable, which is cool until you bring in instruments that *are* tuned!"

Mr Austin underlines the importance to Snapped Ankles of the underground scene they were born into. But with a venue that helped to nurture their talent, Stoke Newington's Total Refreshment Centre, forced to close this summer, he's realistic about the challenge of finding inner-city spaces to play. "The health of the DIY scene is not so great, given the lack of affordable space and the high potential land value of selling said warehouses and arts spaces, but it's there, with great nights bubbling away somewhere. But the people and spaces are pushed a few miles further down the road. We are looking towards Dartford, the Thames Estuary and towards France! Ad-hoc performance events in these spaces have been a necessary ideas incubator for our group."

So, what is Snapped Ankles' advice for surviving as a band in a musical landscape faced by diminishing returns, widespread apathy and venues being turned into luxury flats?

"We don't recommend full-time band behaviour in this country," says Mr Austin. "We suggest lowering your expectations with this kind of thing. It's bad for your bank balance, your mental health and life expectancy… unless you can survive on crisps and cheap lager. We would recommend other professions, such as woodcraft or forestry management, and make amateur music in your evenings and weekends."

***Gary Walker***

*Drink And Glide is out now on The Leaf Label*

# CRATE DIGGING WITH... Laura Veirs

Following the release of her latest record, *The Lookout*, singer-songwriter and acclaimed folk-pop artist Laura Veirs is now a full 10 albums deep into her solo career and is still searching for fresh inspiration. Here, she reveals her most-cherished musical touchstones…

HARVEST MOON
**NEIL YOUNG**
"This is one I go back to again and again. Neil has an inimitable way of writing deep yet simple songs. I find inspiration in a song like *Unknown Legend*, that basically has just two chords but all the emotional depth of some of his greatest work."

THE BEST OF LEONARD COHEN
**LEONARD COHEN**
"I studied *Suzanne* and was blown away by the complexities of the guitar part. It sounds simple at first, but there are unusual patterns that play out effortlessly. The lyrics in this song inspire me so much: 'There are heroes in the seaweed'."

BLUE
**JONI MITCHELL**
"I listened to this a lot in high school and again before I recorded my most recent album. I love how sparse the arrangements are. This is one of the best albums ever because Joni is able to so quickly and deftly dive into deep emotion."

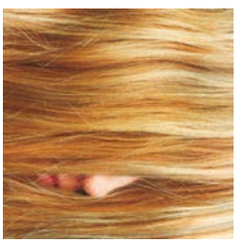
JOURNEY IN SATCHIDANANDA
**ALICE COLTRANE**
"This music is spiritually enriching. It always inspires me to stretch as an artist, mother and wife, to live life and create music with love and peacefulness as my anchors."

INTRODUCING
**KARL BLAU**
"Karl Blau has one of the best voices of our generation and you can hear it clearly on this record. Karl is an old friend and the longer I know him, the deeper his artistry becomes. This is his first collaboration with producer [and Laura's husband] Tucker Martine."

SELF-TITLED
**EMAHOY TSEGUÉ-MARYAM GUÈBROU**
"This music was made by an Ethiopian nun. It's like a river. When I want to calm down, I listen to it. It brings me serenity and peace. It's part classical, part free-flowing improvisation."

CARRIE & LOWELL
**SUFJAN STEVENS**
"I am inspired by Sufjan's lyrical bravery on this album. He reminds me to be vulnerable in my writing. He shares his heart in a musically simple way, but his emotional complexities are very real."

CON TODO EL MUNDO
**KHRUANGBIN**
"I have been binge-listening to these guys. This music feels good and our kids are fans now, too. Mark Speer's guitar playing is virtuosic without being showy. They've inspired me to write my next album on the electric guitar."



SEGUNDO
**JUANA MOLINA**
"Another inimitable artist, a true original. I love how Juana pushes boundaries in her art. I love her mix of organic and electronic instruments. I love that she was a famous comedian and dropped it all to follow her calling to be a musician."

THE GLOW PT. 2
**THE MICROPHONES**
"I love this album for its raw, youthful, rebellious energy. I listened to it a lot when it came out (a long time ago!) and it influenced my lyrics, my approach to the nylon-string guitar, and my do-it-yourself ethos."

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STUDIO
SNAPSHOT

# THE BEATLES

Abbey Road Studios, London, October 1968

**Paul McCartney is pictured here towards the end of recording sessions for *The Beatles* (aka 'The White Album'), which concluded with the recording of Lennon composition *Julia* on 13 October, 1968. The album's protracted production was riven with tensions – Yoko Ono's presence disrupted the unity implied by the album's title, studio mainstay Geoff Emerick left, as did Ringo Starr, to spend time on Peter Sellers' yacht, and disillusioned producer George Martin's authority was sidelined to the extent he went on holiday for two weeks. Some songs (such as *Julia* and *Blackbird*) featured their composer as lone Beatle; some (*Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da*) required alienating levels of perfectionism to complete; others (*Happiness Is A Warm Gun*) briefly rekindled their love of playing together as a unit. Given all of this, it's a wonder it was made at all – and a miracle that, all things considered, it was perhaps their creative peak.**

WHY I LOVE...

**Beat Bop**
Rammellzee
And K-Rob

# DJ MUGGS

Producer and Cypress Hill member DJ Muggs digs out an otherworldly jam that captures the fusion of art and music at the heart of the old-school era, and tells **Sam Willis** how it influenced him...

"The record I love the most is a record called *Beat Bop*. It's very abstract and very illogical and awkward. Rammellzee has this kind of a style in his art, in his philosophy and in his rhymes. He's one of my favourite rappers in the world, ever. He's very influential for me. This record in particular was supposedly produced by Jean-Michel Basquiat, but he really didn't do anything but put his name on it. He did the cover, the single cover, and it's like one of the most expensive hip-hop covers that has ever existed. The rhymes, the flows, Rammellzee's voice and what he's talking about are all incredible. They were probably smoking fucking angel dust when they wrote that song. The fucking song is psychedelic. It's dark, and it sounds like the early days when hip-hop was still a super-raw, underground culture. It was during that time period when hip-hop and the art scenes combined. It's when hip-hop met Andy Warhol. It resonates that time period and the rawness and the energy of the culture.

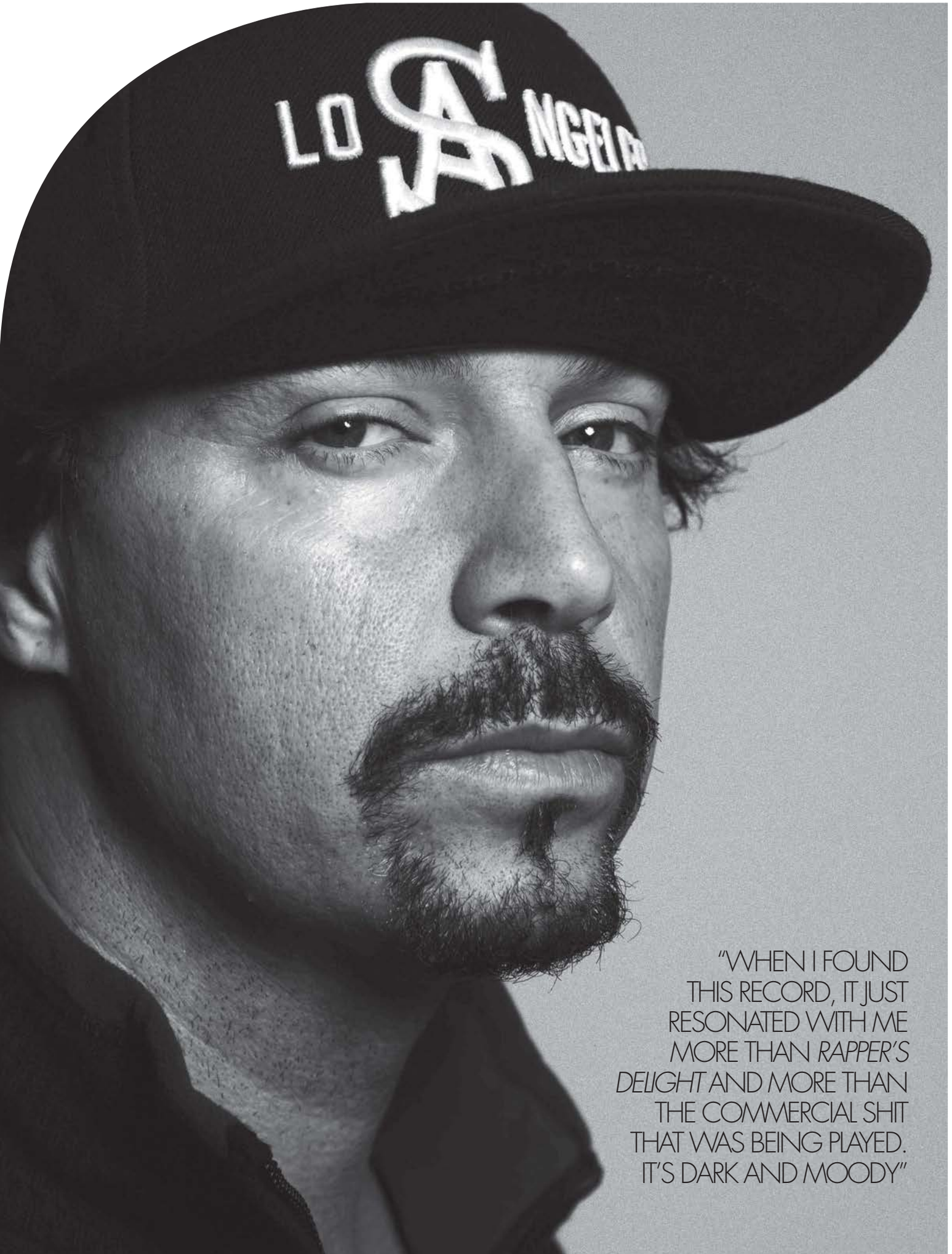
"The song's like 15 minutes long and it's the kind of record that shows you there are no rules. My style is very awkward. I have an awkward approach. I'm not musically trained, I never went to music school and I don't play instruments, so I approach music from a whole different angle. I like awkward, obscure shit and shit that's just out of the norm. That record had a big influence on me early because of all of that.

"I first heard *Beat Bop* in '84. I was in New York and I was like: 'Yo! What the fuck is this right here?' I was already into rap. I was into The Treacherous Three in '78 and in '79 when *Rapper's Delight* came out – that's when I really caught the fever for rap. That's when I started finding things and going deeper and deeper down the wormhole. When I found this record, it just resonated with me more than *Rapper's Delight* and more than all of this commercial shit that was being played. It's dark and fucking moody.

"During that time, Run-D.M.C. started coming about, maybe a bit after. Hip-hop at the time was pretty much 12" singles then… Run-D.M.C. was another game changer, when *Sucker MC's* came out, it was another one of those records that I was like: 'Woah.' That was another one that changed the world. Then, in '87, Rakim *My Melody* came out along with *Eric B. Is President*. These are records that are game changers, that reinvented the music all over again.

"*Beat Bop* didn't affect the whole movement of hip-hop in the same way as they did, but there's a certain aesthetic of people that know this music and get into it. Rammellzee was an artist, a graff artist, and he is mad influential as an artist, too. You're starting to see more stuff after he passed away. Red Bull just did a big show for him in New York and it's ridiculous. It's not a mainstream thing, the people who know are the people who know. They're a certain type of person into some really dark, art shit.

"I think hip-hop is just as important today… I've never listened to the radio and got what I needed from the radio. You've got to go seek the music and find the music from the record stores and in the underground. The underground is incredible still. You have SoundCloud rappers who are doing trap shit and turn-up shit and you have rappers who are doing more of a New York hip-hop sound that are killing it, that are fucking dope. People like Roc Marciano, Westside Gunn… It's one of my favourite times ever now." ●




"WHEN I FOUND THIS RECORD, IT JUST RESONATED WITH ME MORE THAN *RAPPER'S DELIGHT* AND MORE THAN THE COMMERCIAL SHIT THAT WAS BEING PLAYED. IT'S DARK AND MOODY"

TunewOleg

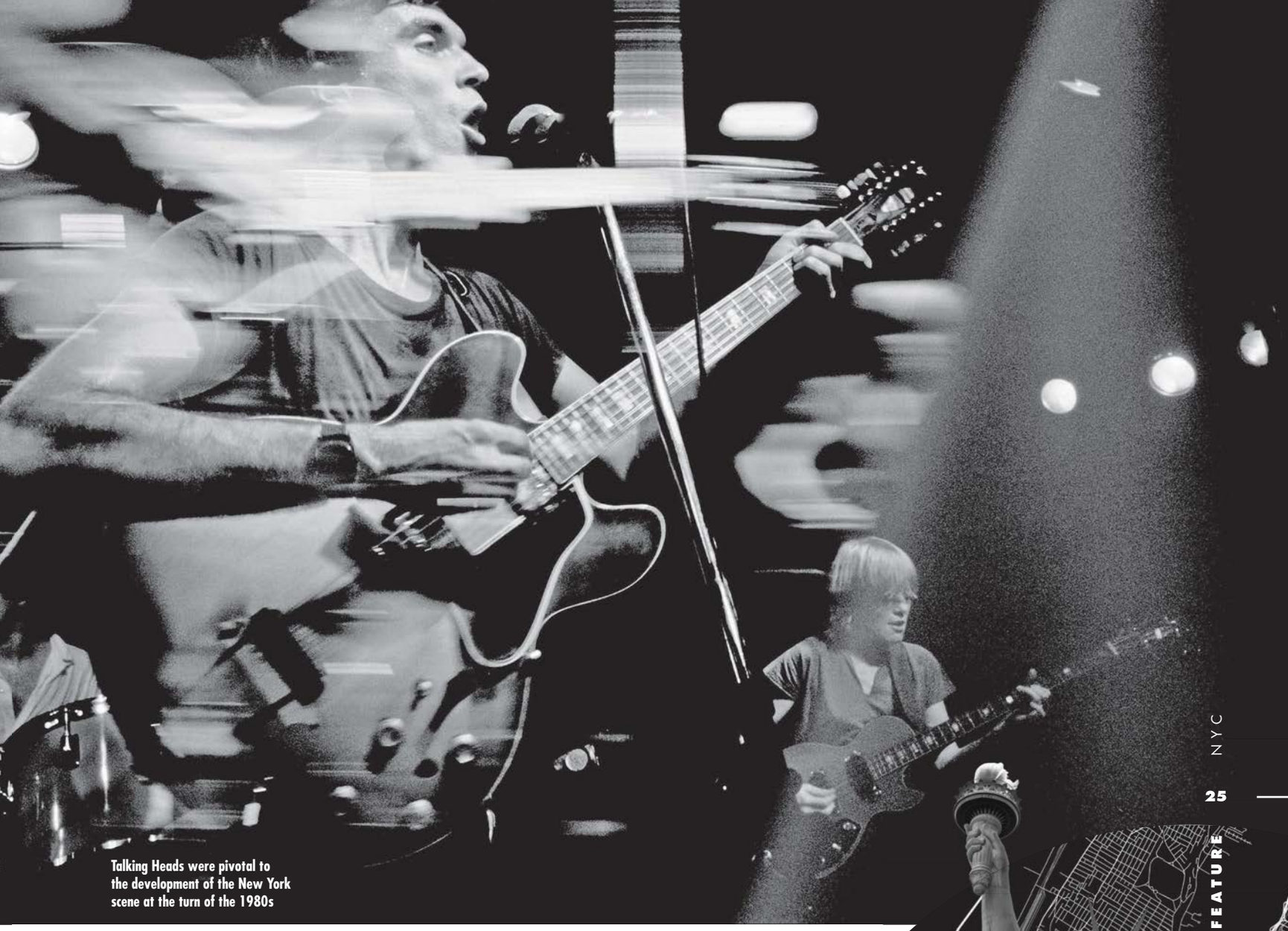
# This Ain't NO DISCO

**Gareth Murphy** visits Downtown Manhattan at the dawn of the 80s to explore a dazzlingly influential moment in pop culture that forged the decade and pointed the way into the 90s...

A view of the dancefloor at the Mudd Club on White Street in New York in 1979

Typically, a musical happening acquires a genre term. But every now and then, there are happenings referred to only by a time and a place. New York in the 1979 to '82 period is possibly the most spectacular example. Too big for any one genre label to fit, this was the mother of all melting-pot eruptions, that shaped the popular landscape for at least two decades to come.

To understand what was happening and why it was concentrated in Downtown Manhattan, the story begins in the bankrupt mid 70s, when New York City was a rat-infested wasteland of junkies and crumbling brownstones. From a grotty Downtown club called CBGB, the Ramones detonated the punk explosion, but the word 'punk', meaning scumbag or petty criminal in American slang, was always going to be a hard sell to American radio stations. That's why, in and around late 1977, the term 'New Wave' was popularised by indies such as Sire. The idea was to persuade sceptical jocks to spin punkish records such as *Psycho Killer* by Talking Heads, which to



Talking Heads were pivotal to the development of the New York scene at the turn of the 1980s

be fair, weren't really punk anyway. The idea took off and New Wave became synonymous with punk's prettier cousins on both sides of the Atlantic: Blondie, Talking Heads, Devo, Ian Dury & The Blockheads, Lene Lovich, The Stranglers, Elvis Costello, XTC and others who rose up on the back of punk but, being 'real' musicians to begin with, made ever-more slick and radio-friendly records through 1978.

At exactly the same time, disco was exploding on a grand scale. But in its original form, it too had begun as a local DIY subculture. In the early 70s, long before the uptown disco palaces such as Studio 54 opened, a pioneer DJ named David Mancuso had been turning cheap loft spaces into makeshift party zones with lighting, balloons and state-of-the-art amplification. And because Mancuso grew up in a multicultural orphanage, he wanted his loft parties to embody the principles of diversity and community. Everyone was welcome: black, Latino, white, gay, straight, young, old, poor… It was the same for the records he mixed: Afrobeat, European electronica, percussive, psychedelic, soul, Latin, funk and more.

The rapid proliferation of loft parties throughout the mid 70s in turn changed the landscape of New York's indie record stores. Inspired by Mancuso, a new generation of loft-party DJs – Larry Levan, Nicky Siano, Danny Krivit and many others – were scouring the city for rhythmic rarities. Noticing this growing niche, independent distributors and importers began consolidating their own alternative networks around specialist indie stores where a new generation of musos and party people, bored of mainstream rock, was congregating in growing numbers.

## DISCO INFERNO

Between 1977 and 1978, every major label jumped on the bandwagon and churned out so much schlocky disco product that the genre boomed and experienced a sudden backlash. By 1979, the 'Disco Sucks'

actually saw a football stadium in Chicago burning disco records. The forced closure of Studio 54 in 1980 after its owners were imprisoned for tax evasion was symbolic of what was happening generally. Glam disco was dying, raw punk was passé and even this New Wave was morphing into something different again.

But the underlying principles that disco and punk had championed – diversity and doing it yourself – lived on. The action was moving downtown where, thanks to cheap rent and a local arty community, post-punky disco clubs were being opened inside former warehouses and factories. On 36 West 62nd Street, there was Hurrah, which became the first to use giant videoscreens. Another hotspot was Paradise Garage, which opened in 1977 in the Hudson Square neighbourhood.

Geared towards a largely gay crowd, its resident DJ Larry Levan became instrumental in forging the now-familiar club formula of hard beats and strobe lighting. The Mudd Club on White Street in the TriBeCa district opened in 1978 and was the place where artists such as Keith Haring and Jean-Michel Basquiat rubbed shoulders with the likes of Bowie and Eno, who both moved into New York around 1979 to feed off this new energy. Although small, the Mudd Club in particular became a beehive: Talking Heads tested new material for their tide-changing third album, *Fear Of Music*, on the club's stage while it was being recorded in Tina Weymouth and Chris Frantz's loft.

Like the Ramones before them, Talking Heads were signed to Sire Records, whose new, young A&R man at the time, Michael Rosenblatt, was a 20-year-old migrant from Los Angeles. In December 1977, he'd seen The B-52's, who were duly signed to Sire's parent company, Warner. Within a year, he brought to Sire an English New Wave single called *Pop Muzik* by M, which went to No. 1 on the Hot 100. "It was the tail-end of the whole CBGB era, when the likes of Andy Warhol and Lou Reed would come to see the Ramones," Rosenblatt explains. "But I can't emphasise enough how important Talking Heads were in what was taking shape. Tracks like *I Zimbra* or *Crosseyed And Painless* really captured the emerging sound. Everyone was watching Talking Heads."

It's an opinion David Bowie shared. He was such an avid fan, many Bowie lovers consider *Lodger* and *Scary Monsters (And Super Creeps)* as his "Talking Heads' albums. His video for *Fashion* was even filmed in Hurrah in 1980.

## SCENE STEALER

Sire was the biggest label on the scene, but smaller indies were sprouting. ZE Records was the imprint that brought us Kid Creole & The Coconuts, Coati Mundi, Was (Not Was), Lizzy Mercier Descloux, The Waitresses and the "No Wave" weirdness of James White & The Blacks. Another indie of note was 99 Records, operated out of the popular Greenwich Village record store of the same name. It released ESG, Liquid Liquid and Bush Tetras. Incidentally, one customer who hung out at 99 Records was Rick Rubin, who went on to co-found Def Jam, the label that broke the Beastie Boys.

The original hip-hop label, however, was Sugar Hill – which released the seminal *Rapper's Delight* by the Sugarhill Gang in 1979, and in 1982, *The Message* by Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five. The second hip-hop indie was Tommy Boy, founded in 1981 for Afrika Bambaataa by a former *Disco News* journalist named Tom Silverman, who had been describing this post-disco mutation circa 1979-80 as "Dance Rock".

It's an accurate enough term. Take Blondie's 1980 No. 1 smash hit, *Rapture*,

NY's Grandmaster Flash & The Furious Five live at The Venue in London in 1982

"STUDIO 54 WAS THEATRE. DANCETERIA WAS ABOUT PEOPLE DANCING. IT WAS REAL... IT WAS A CIRCUS WITHOUT THE RICH"

Blondie's 1980 single *Rapture* combined many of NY's sounds into one hit record, namechecking the city's hip-hop talent in its rap sections

which managed to mix everything that was happening into one song – opiated post-punk on a post-disco groove with Debbie Harry rapping, and a graffiti artist tagging a wall in the accompanying video. Also shot in 1980, the video for *Crosseyed And Painless* by Talking Heads featured 'robotics' – the original term for hip-hop dancing.

This was the very beginning of dance music, hip-hop, electronica… all the generic terms we'd be using much later. The Downtown club that best embodied the punky-disco mutation was Danceteria, opened in 1979 on 37th Street by a German entrepreneur named Rudolf Pieper (it later moved to 21st Street).

With three floors – one for live music, a basement discotheque and a top floor for exhibitions and performance art – it attracted a younger crowd. Resident DJ Mark Kamins developed his own distinct sound, mixing up improbable cocktails of UK indie, electronica and cutting-edge grooves from all over the world. Kamins described the atmosphere in Danceteria as "anti-Studio 54. It was a circus without the rich. At Studio 54, the people on the dancefloor were paid to dance. It was a show for your Calvin Kleins, your Bianca Jaggers, your Yves Saint Laurents to do their drugs, drink their champagne and watch the dancefloor. Studio 54 was theatre. Danceteria was about people dancing. It was real."

Club DJs were mixing records and manipulating sound with increasing dexterity, but it was more the hip FM stations such as WBLS, WKTU and WLIR that popularised the new fashion of "cutting". Live on air, DJs such as Shep Pettibone, Marley Marl, Red Alert, Chep Nuñez and the Latin Rascals performed a technique of rhythmically alternating between two copies of the same record to create chops, scratches and dub-style echoes. What they called the "mega mix" used the same tricks, but with different records.

## DEM'S THE BREAKS

In 1981, Tom Silverman remembers visiting a Bronx record store and being struck by a peculiar sight in the basement. "There's just a guy at a desk and behind him, there's this strange selection of records: Bob James, The Monkees, Kraftwerk, The Incredible Bongo Band, Cerrone, Billy Squier, a certain record by the Eagles – all these records that seemingly had nothing to do with each other. But there's this line of 17-year-old kids out the door, waiting to buy two copies of each." When Silverman quizzed the youngsters, they explained: "We buy what Afrika Bambaataa plays," a reference to the Zulu Nation DJ whose mission was to pacify and spiritualise the ghettos with street culture.

Or, as Rick Rubin put it: "Rap and early hip-hop was black punk," the perfect hybrid between disco's use of turntables as instruments, and punk's DIY attitude of protest and self-empowerment. It was as though the whole music business had been spinning leisurely at 33rpm throughout the corporate, couch-bound 70s, until the combined forces of punk, disco, New Wave and hip-hop pushed music back up to 45rpm and got people up off their asses.

And with this change in tempo, a new drug called ecstasy emerged in the Downtown clubs. Chris Frantz recalls to *Long Live Vinyl* that it was as early as 1981 when: "My first and only taste of ecstasy happened in the basement of the Mudd Club." Not only was he the drummer for Talking Heads and Tom Tom Club, he was married to Heads bassist Tina Weymouth. "An Asian girl took me down. She had a pill which she chopped up into lines and we snorted it. I immediately got so horny, I knew I should leave before something happened that I'd regret. So I jumped in my car and drove home to our loft!"

"It started hitting the clubs in around 1982," remembers Michael Rosenblatt. "There was this woman called Cindy Ecstasy, whose boyfriend I think was actually making the stuff. She was one of the very first to make the connection between ecstasy and dance music. Soft Cell introduced me to her when we launched Non-Stop Erotic Cabaret in Danceteria. She gave me a tab and the rest is history." Cindy Ecstasy became such a ▶

Ron Wood and Keith Richards at the Stones' *Emotional Rescue* release party at NY's Danceteria in 1980. Like its predecessor, the album was influenced by the music of the city's clubs



local legend, she even sang on Soft Cell's 1982 hit single *Torch*. Another party girl orbiting around this gang was a 24-year-old Madonna, who celebrated her imminent record deal with Sire by taking ecstasy with Rosenblatt in Danceteria. Her first 12", *Everybody*, in late 1982, was a clubby groover produced by Mark Kamins.

## TEENAGE TECH

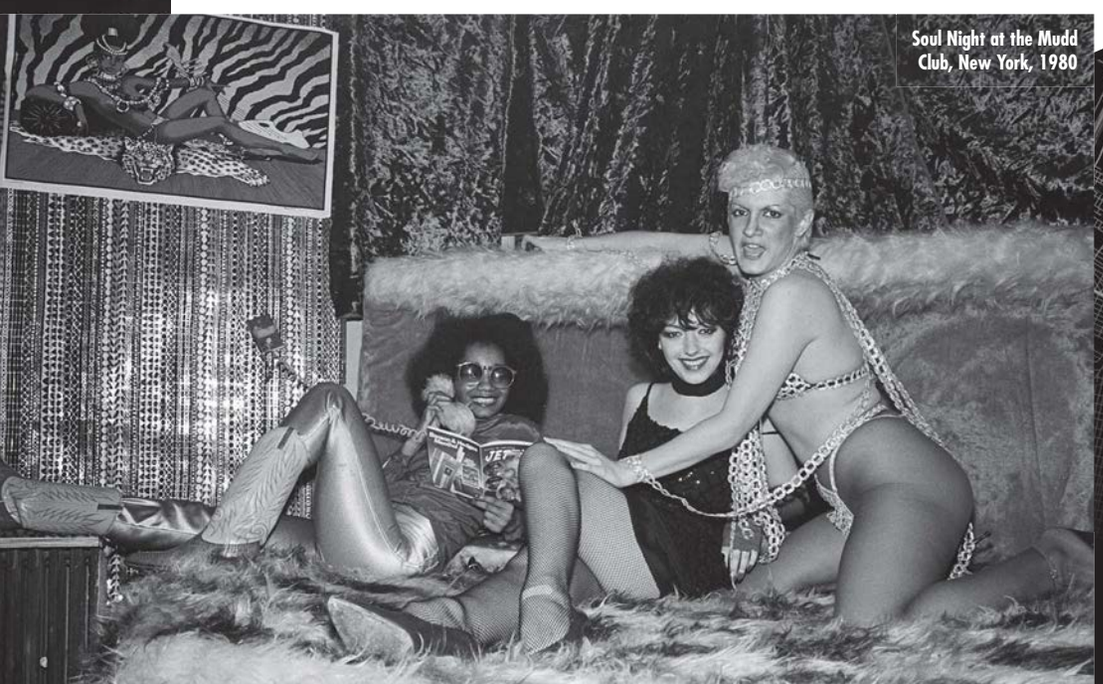
Throughout 1982, sounds became increasingly electronic as new technology evolved. The turn of the 80s had seen the birth of the Roland TR-808 drum machine, the Fairlight CMI sampler, MTV and the Sony Walkman. John Lennon had just been shot, Ronald Reagan had just been elected, New York was coming out of recession, and every American was buying VHS recorders and hooking up to cable TV. Videogames such as *Pac-Man*, *Donkey Kong*, *Space Invaders* and *Scramble* were creating the ambient noise for a new generation of teenagers. Between 1981 and 1982 alone, arcade machines in North America tripled to 1.5 million. Bleeps, synths, drum machines and music videos were the new norm of a pop world that had never felt so globalist.

After a depressing slump throughout the 70s, New York was the centre of the world again. As Tina Weymouth tells us, the magic of the moment owed much to all this new technology. "Portable synths and boomboxes that were also excellent tape recorders got cheaper. And that made it possible for the punk rock, funk and hip-hop crowds to cross-pollinate on the streets of our own backyard." But for Weymouth, it was also

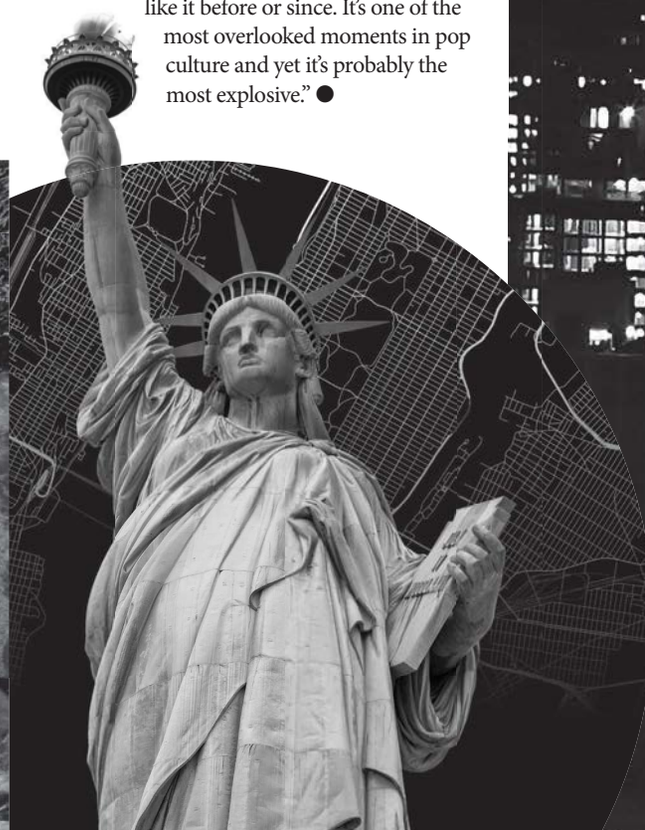
**"THERE WERE VISUAL ARTISTS, WRITERS, DANCERS, FILMMAKERS, PUNKS, LATINO MUSICIANS, SOUNDS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD"**

the wider political atmosphere that enabled such a can-do, multicultural scene to flourish, albeit for a brief time. "With gay-tolerant Mayor Koch and the opening of venues such as the Mudd Club, the whole racist 'Disco Sucks' narrow-mindedness was ditched. So, we might dance to a mix by Grandmaster Flash as Grace Jones got bodypainted by Keith Haring! The message was: 'We are all radiant children!' There'd been a positive upswing in the economy under the Carter administration that attracted a friendlier, less cynical vision of the future, before the dual downers of Reaganism and AIDS crept in."

"The thing about the Downtown scene is that it was so incredibly diverse," concurs Michael Rosenblatt. "There were visual artists, writers, dancers, filmmakers, punks, Latino musicians, sounds from all over the world. The hip-hop guys like Afrika Bambaataa were there, even the English tastemakers like New Order were constantly passing through. Everyone was hanging out and feeding off each other. I don't think there's been anything like it before or since. It's one of the most overlooked moments in pop culture and yet it's probably the most explosive." ●



Soul Night at the Mudd Club, New York, 1980



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# REBEL SOUL

With fifth solo album *Natural Rebel* out now and a UK tour underway, Richard Ashcroft's star is once again in the ascendant. **John Earls** meets him in the studio for a personal rendition…

Long before *Long Live Vinyl* turns the dictaphone on to formally speak to Richard Ashcroft, he's already offered more entertainment than most singers' full interviews. We meet at State Of The Ark Studios in Richmond, where Ashcroft has recorded since The Verve. He's chosen the venue so he can play two of excellent new album *Natural Rebel*'s songs at full volume on the studio speakers: unabashed love song *That's How Strong* and the album's swaggering closer, *Money Money*.

Although he merely mouths the words to *That's How Strong* while sat next to *LLV* at the huge mixing desk, by the time the riff from *Money Money* kicks in, Ashcroft is on his feet, pacing around the console and giving the familiar 'Come on!' outstretched-arms gesture as he yells the song's words to the studio wall. He looks every bit as happy as he does facing an arena audience. Not only is your startled reporter here, but so is Ashcroft's producer Jon Kelly, his publicist Katie… and his friendly wife Kate, the subject of *That's How Strong*.

Just as Katie and Kate discuss where our interview should take place, Ashcroft strides off down a side room, grabs a pair of swivel-stools; and that's when the fun begins. You don't so much interview Richard Ashcroft as play pinball, hoping any words you manage to get in will lead him down a route that may occasionally resemble the question you asked. Which isn't to say Ashcroft isn't engaged – he's just got more life going on in his head than even someone with his rapid-fire mouth knows what to do with.

Ashcroft's eccentricity is a reputation he's keenly aware of, and playful with. "I started out as Mad Richard," he acknowledges. "I've avoided the traps I could have fallen into and, after a lot of scrapes, I've got to the point where I'm a professional human being now. I'm thankful for what I've got, and for what my fans want to hear. I still want a good time and to have a laugh, but I can't be out of my mind taking drugs. People always want the northern soul to be luxury scum. If you want, I can be luxury scum. But, really, do you think I'm going to be daft enough in this visual age to look like a trawlerman from some indie band standing in a field of rapeseed oil?"

## FUTURE'S BRIGHT

Indeed, having shaved his head for his previous album *These People* two years ago, Ashcroft is back to looking the luxuriously haired, whippet-thin Proper Rock Star he's essentially been since Verve debut *A Storm In Heaven* 25 years ago. Do his supersize sunglasses stay on for our interview? Of course. Ashcroft's medical certificate probably states: "Colour of eyes: mirrored."

A recurring theme in his discourse is that it's time to "draw a line in the sand" between quality music and everything else. That isn't to say Ashcroft is a 'real music = guitars' traditionalist. He speaks as approvingly of Drake as Catfish And The Bottlemen. For Ashcroft, it's all about intent.

"I want to take people back up a level," he asserts. "There was a time when people woke up to what was happening and went 'Yes! Fuck that fake shit. We want these musicians' ▶

Dean Chalkney

Dean Chalkney

energy: they're us, and we're them.' You're either an end-of-the-pier entertainer on steroids, or you're making a living from your own creation."

Ashcroft has previously stated his antipathy towards *The X Factor*, but is more amenable now, saying: "I saw the show at the weekend, and I actually thought, 'Bless everyone on it'. As an entertainment show, carry on – make your money and enjoy it. But don't come onto musicians' turf, because you've got a six-month prime-time TV advert every year. The mainstream needs to start accepting that the ones who come from a different path to get their songs must have some kind of vehicle within that mainstream. There's two parallel cultures now. But we can come together, without dividing us."

As part of that unifying vision, *Natural Rebel* shuns political lyrics in favour of songs of love and hope. It's a message Ashcroft is fully committed to, explaining: "I'm trying to be more open on this record. I can't save the world, and I don't have a great enough opinion of myself to believe I can guide anyone in any political way. But I can offer a transcendent experience when you see me play live. We can leave the daily world behind, to go to a higher place than that."

What about those who say it's music's role to reflect the world in which it's made? "I get groups of people at my concerts who may have thought they were divided: at the front of a show in Glasgow, it'll be one guy who supports Rangers, another Celtic. Why would I affect that with my opinion? I'm more like Socrates. I haven't worked out the answers, so you tell me, oh all-knowing-one, what we should do. Because my job is to survive this business, keep a family and try to become a better man."

## PERSONAL RESURRECTION

It's a theme expressed most directly in *That's How Strong* and its declaration of love for Kate, the ex-Spiritualized keyboardist who married Ashcroft in 1995. "I'm glad to have got that song down forever for me and Kate," he smiles. "I admired John Lennon doing that with *Woman*. It would have been easy for Lennon to have done a punk-sounding record and been regarded as cool. To make *Woman* when punk is happening? He's opening himself up, and that makes him the biggest punk of all. *Woman* is as punk as it gets."

The new album's lead single *Surprised By The Joy* features the line "I'm surprised I'm alive, I guess." But Ashcroft makes it clear he's not referring to his own past misadventures. "It's not about me, but the sense that waking up every day is a personal resurrection, and that's a miracle in itself," he says, his smile filling that narrow face. "Every day, you get a new start."

At its best, Ashcroft feels his music contributes joy. "I've written songs that are modern-day folk classics. *The Drugs Don't Work* will be handed down among generations, whether it's vinyl, digitised or all of that finishes. People will still go: 'Do you remember that song that went, 'All this talk of getting old…'? I was 26 when I wrote that, and me and my audience have been through a hell of a lot since. And I'm still learning from those songs I wrote years ago, I've not outgrown them – the meaning of some songs I wrote in my 20s is only hitting me now, like a stone."

As an example, he cites *The Drugs Don't Work* and its description of someone past the point of medical care. "I lost my nan

Ashcroft's summer was spent touring with The Rolling Stones, Roger Waters and Liam Gallagher

Dean Chalkney

> "MY JOB IS TO SURVIVE THIS BUSINESS, KEEP A FAMILY AND TRY TO BECOME A BETTER MAN"

Dean Chalkney

## BITTER SWEET TASTE LINGERS

In June, Richard Ashcroft supported The Rolling Stones at their Manchester and Edinburgh stadium shows. That's despite the Stones' old label ABKCO getting 100% of the publishing royalties from The Verve's *Bitter Sweet Symphony* – because of its sample of The Andrew Oldham Orchestra's version of *The Last Time*.

Did Ashcroft ask Mick Jagger for his royalties back? "No!" laughs Ashcroft who, 21 years on from the single reaching No. 2, is sanguine about the case. "Mick would have to ask ABKCO for me to get me our royalties back, as they own all the Stones' 60s publishing. When *Bitter Sweet Symphony* first came out, I'd have liked it if a colossus like the Stones could have joined forces with The Verve and go double-barrelled after Allen Klein and sort it."

ABKCO owner Klein died in 2009, and Ashcroft says: "Now Klein is dead, in a weird way I enjoy what's happened. Since 1997, the incredible lyrics, that melody, the freshest song of that decade… that company over there in America takes every single penny from it? That is wild. I couldn't go to my morning yoga session and eat my steel-cut oats with that on my mind."

Ashcroft believes ABKCO may yet pay The Verve their due, saying: "If I was at ABKCO, I'd be saying: 'Listen, this ain't good for our brand. Maybe we need to sort something out with Ashcroft, because we can't find anyone else who claims to have written those lyrics.' But you have to be real and say: 'I'm not working down a hole in the rain, I'm doing alright.' Straight after, *The Drugs Don't Work* got to No. 1. So suck it, ABKCO."

**Fifth solo album *Natural Rebel* is available in a variety of limited, signed vinyl formats**

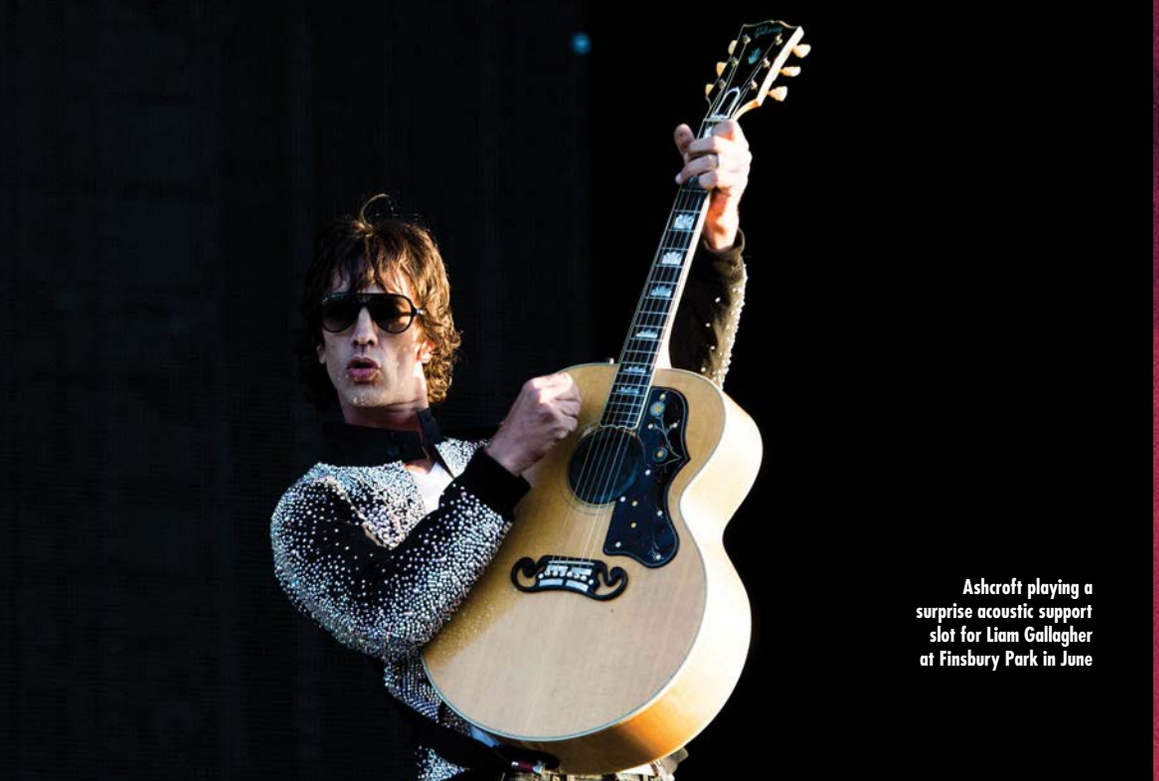
and my auntie recently, and this is the first time either of them won't witness an album of mine. Playing *The Drugs Don't Work* now, it's…" Ashcroft tries to sigh with regret, but begins to cry. Taking a gulp of water and, yes, removing his sunglasses to wipe his eyes, he soon recovers his composure. Our interview had been delayed while Ashcroft arranged his grandmother's funeral, and he ruefully smiles, saying: "Sorry, man, it's a bit raw."

## EMOTIONAL RESCUE

There's no need for Ashcroft to apologise – as he points out, gigs like his are one of the few places it's socially acceptable for men to cry. He doesn't like to over-complicate the emotional heft he wants that music to have, explaining: "I don't know much, and I know that, in a sense, I'm limited. That's not on purpose, but I know that there's so much more to explore with the music I make. So why would I try to play a jazz chord in the middle of a song, just to show that I can?" He admits new song *Birds Fly* shares its chord structure with Dion's *Runaround Sue*, laughing: "I could have said to the musicians: 'Can you squeeze something in there, so it's not like all those other songs?' But I want that essence underneath my melody, as I love '50s rock 'n' roll when it was just about the song, not obsessively analysing everything."

One area where Ashcroft feels technology brings benefits is the ability to release music instantly. He approves of artists such as Kanye West and Drake constantly releasing new music, and hopes to follow suit. "I can go: 'Right, it's February, *Natural Rebel* is still out there, how about these eight tunes which maybe have a completely different spin?' I'm excited by that freedom." Before *These People*, it was six years since Ashcroft had released new music. "I've had a lot of clogged years, a lot of pain and a lot of wasted time," he concludes. "I've reflected on that as I've got older. I can either go down with all that waste, or I can get on with the time I've got left. I was known as 'Columbo' in The Verve. And now it's time to make haste – this is Columbo Rides Again." ●

> "I LOVE '50S ROCK 'N' ROLL WHEN IT WAS JUST ABOUT THE SONG, NOT OBSESSIVELY ANALYSING EVERYTHING"



**Ashcroft playing a surprise acoustic support slot for Liam Gallagher at Finsbury Park in June**

Robin Pope

## THE SOUND OF SILENCE

After a summer playing shows with The Rolling Stones, Roger Waters and Liam Gallagher, Richard Ashcroft is on a mission to return live music to sounding natural for the musicians on stage, rather than having pristine quality from the mixing desk going to in-ear monitors which remove any extraneous crowd noises.

"I'd love singers to go back to using monitors in concerts," Ashcroft pleads. "The power you have on stage should be the power you had in your practice room, and you don't put earbuds in then. A band on stage, bobbing along with everyone having their own personal mixes in their ears, there's something very odd about that."

Ashcroft's guitarist Steve Wyreman has worked with Rihanna, J Cole and Nas. "Steve told me about 'dead stages', where there are 15,000 fans going crazy in the arena, but there's no sound on the stage at all, because it's all coming from the mixing desk. What problem was there that needed fixing like this? I was lucky to come through when we had the best monitors in the world to check how you sounded – and just as they got it right, nobody wants them."

For Ashcroft, the best onstage sound was when The Verve supported Oasis on their first arena tours, with veteran engineer Mark Coyle handling the live sound. "Coyley had it so loud," Ashcroft enthuses. "I'd never heard a guitar so loud, and I haven't since, either. It was as close as I'll get to seeing The Velvet Underground play live."

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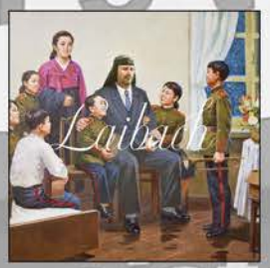


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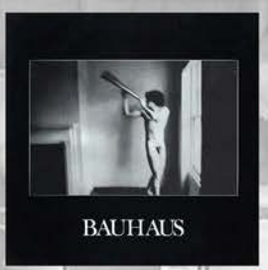
THE SOUND OF MUSIC
Mute

**BAUHAUS**
MASK
Beggars Banquet

**DEAD CAN DANCE**
DIONYSUS
Play It Again Sam

**STEREOLAB**
PENG!
Too Pure




**BAUHAUS**
IN THE FLAT FIELD
4AD

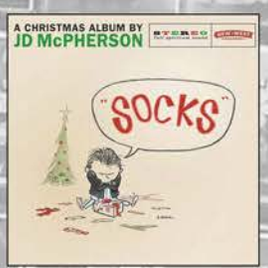
**STEREOLAB**
THE GROOP PLAYED
SPACE AGE BATCHELOR PAD MUSIC
Too Pure

**PLANNINGTOROCK**
POWERHOUSE
DFA

**ED HARCOURT**
BEYOND THE END
Point Of Departure

**DAUGHTERS**
YOU WON'T GET WHAT YOU WANT
IPECAC

**HIPPO CAMPUS**
BAMBI
Transgressive




**JD McPHERSON**
SOCKS
New West

**TWO MEDICINE**
ASTROPSYCHOSIS
Bella Union

# Lovelorn

As he releases a new collaborative album and prepares to go back into the studio, Baxter Dury tells **Jonathan Wright** about beat poetry, blagging and the sudden appearance of an Omen child…

There are musicians who arrive seemingly fully formed in the public consciousness. Others worry away at what they do, trying out approaches and guises that don't quite work until, if they're determined enough and lucky, something clicks into place. And then, in the case of late flowerer but long-time contender Baxter Dury, they get called a "mockney-in-chief" in an article for their London-inflected troubles.

"I was really happy about that," says Dury, a hint of mischief in his voice. "I'm the only person that's really happy about being called a mockney, because that's what I am. I don't find it a slant or anything negative. We're all a kind of salad of different stuff, I am that thing. It was all a bit 'Oi-oi! Boys' Club' at home, yet both my parents met at the Royal College, you know? It was all very artsy-fartsy, but it was all very geezer-geezery."

He's talking here about his upbringing as the son of Ian Dury, of which more later. But it's a remark that also acts as a good starting point to describe the music that Dury has lately been making. Last year's *Prince Of Tears*, his fifth album, was straight out of leftfield in terms of the textures of the songs, yet – in contrast to earlier records, where he sometimes gave the impression of hiding in plain sight – the latter-day Baxter Dury swaggers, speak-singing tall tales of monstrous masculinity, impossible situations and, in songs that deal with the aftermath of his break-up from girlfriend Margaux Ract, broken-hearted regrets.

He's similarly high in the mix on his latest album, *B.E.D*, a collaboration with French producer Étienne de Crécy and Delilah Holliday of London punks Skinny Girl Diet, recorded in a "bored, idle month" hanging out and "piffling around, being a bit of a knob" in Paris shortly after finishing *Prince Of Tears*. "I just sort of talked about what was going on in a very beat-poetry way, and it sort of worked," says Dury. "Luckily, Étienne didn't really understand what the hell I was talking about, but got a sense of the tone and went: 'Zis is cool, zis is cool'. So I didn't really censor his fun, because it was not like a project that I really was overly critical of, in that I didn't really care. Which was quite freeing – we did it in a few weeks. We ate mostly lunch really, we should have called it *Lunch – Euro Lunch*."

## WHITE COATS, WHITE SUIT

It's a project about which he's self-deprecating to the point of calling it "a bunch of demos with a French bloke" and yet it's Dury's voice that so often lifts these "skeletal", 80s-hip-hop-influenced sketches. A case in point is *White Coats*, where Dury intones: "Airbnbs, distressed bits of old food, evidence of something unproprietorial… Chinese whispers and other forged dreams."

Though the song lasts little more than a minute, it's uncomfortably close to being the aural equivalent of being licked by a stranger, albeit one possibly suffering from depression. At other times, this gift for observation takes a wistful turn or, on *Eurostars*, with its "impotent, white, obvious people with shocking clothes and awful music", gets barbed. "I think I'm in a good place right now, and I don't know how long that will last, but I feel quite confident," Dury says of his recent work. "But that could be the very undoing of me, that feeling of going: 'Now I'm good,' and then you make the worst fucking shit you've ever heard."

Well, it's a possibility, if Dury's new "cod-80s-reggae-hip-hop kind of thing" direction doesn't work out. But before he records new material, there's a final UK tour to undertake this autumn in support of *Prince Of Tears*, dates that will see Dury playing bigger venues than ever, confirmation of his growing

# Troubadour

status. This will involve getting his now trademark stage gear, a white suit, cleaned. "It's amazing what a ponce you become," he says. "I've actually found a dude and I've bonded with a dry cleaner. My suit is an atlas of the stains of tour life. It's got blood – and other things that are unidentifiable."

The suit helps Dury to play a character and deal with such incidents as a "weird Omen child" who "looked like a miniature version of Guns N' Roses" appearing next to him on stage. "I was thinking, 'Can anyone else see this child? Have I gone mental?'" Dury jokes, but photographic evidence exists. "There's various guises you have to develop to survive entertaining people, you can't just be your raw version of yourself, you can't survive that," he says of performing. "When you get good at entertaining, you learn the right character to be at the right time – and it's all a part of you, but it's an *inflated* version."

## AT HOME WITH CHAOS

This seems an opportune moment to mention again Baxter's artsy-fartsy, geezer-geezery father, a man whose public image was similarly writ large. After all, we meet at a pub in Hammersmith, The Blue Anchor, just around the corner from the "riverside gaff" Ian Dury called home. Dury junior, who emphasises that his mother, artist Betty Rathmell, gave stability, offers only fond memories of growing up with his father.

"We sort of had money, but we didn't really live like we did," he says. "We had no milk or there was no food being cooked. It was like a squat and the local policeman would come round once a week [to deal with neighbourly complaints], so it was pretty chaotic, but it was *fun*." There's a parallel, he says, with *The Sopranos*, in that it was "a bit of a complicated family", but still one where people did "the same stuff as anyone else".

*"A weird Omen child [appeared] who looked like a miniature version of Guns N' Roses. I was thinking, 'Can anyone else see this child?'"*

It's this part of the conversation that leads into Dury talking about being a 'mockney' after *LLV* asks him if he learnt how to play a character from his father ("I don't know whether anything is that conscious"). But whatever the truth here, the younger Dury had front in his business dealings. The way he tells it, he first got signed by Rough Trade boss Geoff Travis, who acted "on a whim", after the duo had a meeting.

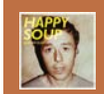
"I had one song, I played it to Geoff, he really liked it," Dury recalls, "and I said: 'I really want to go and meet this dude in Texas and he wants to go on a road trip from Texas, via Mexico, into California. Can you give me £3,000 worth of traveller's cheques?'" Astonishingly, Travis said yes, although the trip didn't go so well after Dury's depressed Texan travelling companion spent days lying "star-shaped" in motels.

"I was quite a chubby bloke and, actually, we spent so long on this road trip that I used the opportunity, when he had these various meltdowns, for me to get fit," he says. "And I did press-ups and stuff, and ran up and down

## BAXTER CATALOGUE

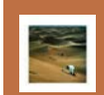
**LEN PARROT'S MEMORIAL LIFT**
2002, ROUGH TRADE
A wistful and slight debut that, for all it features contributions from luminaries such as Geoff Barrow and Richard Hawley, doesn't quite come together. Dury's vocals often barely rise above a whisper.

**FLOOR SHOW**
2005, ROUGH TRADE
A darker album than its predecessor: so much so that it sounds like it was written and recorded during a kind of endless 4am of the soul. The talent is obvious, but Dury still seems to be reaching.




**HAPPY SOUP**
2011, REGAL
The album on which Baxter Dury seems to find his voice, a break-up record (a recurring theme…) of dry observations and sparse arrangements that show off Baxter's underappreciated gift for melody.

**IT'S A PLEASURE**
2014, PIAS
More of the same, as Dury again serves up a mix of self-consciously cheesy Eurobeats, wry observations and near-spoken lyrics – but there's a sense of a man refining what he does.



**PRINCE OF TEARS**
2017, PIAS/HEAVENLY
After 15 years, his best album. It's not that it's a huge departure, more that the musical backing has been further stripped back to reveal Dury the lyricist in all his mockney glory – less *and* more.

As yet, Dury's records are still available at prices that won't break the bank. You can easily pick up a mint copy of *Len Parrot's…*, for example, for £20, while even a white-label 12" of *Lisa Said* (2005) will set you back around £6. At a guess, that may change if Dury's seemingly inexorable rise continues.

Dury's aiming to make "avant-garde music that works"

highways near weird motels surrounded by dust. And I was so thin, but my head was still fat, and I looked like a golf club. And I didn't write any songs. And Geoff never asked me for any. So that's how I started."

If Dury's first two albums [see boxout] were understated, somehow fragile, third album *Happy Soup* was, in its way, as much of a leap forward as *Prince Of Tears*, perhaps because a man who, as a serial skiver from school ("never went into an examining room") and was, by his own estimation, a "blagger", had learnt about discipline.

"I started dating a ballet dancer," he says, "and she [Isabel] was like a senior soloist in the Royal Ballet and she taught me the fact that no one actually works harder than she does and everything is achievable. And I was like: 'Jesus Christ…' That really changed my whole perspective. And actually, splitting up with her, in the wake of that, I started to work again, inspired by what I'd learnt. She only lives round the corner, we're still really good friends. She taught me, actually, about shutting up, getting on with it and to stop abusing time."

## A REALLY-NO-MORALS MF

Nevertheless, as Dury tells it, his working process seems designed to work with his own inherent capacity to "run quite a chaotic shop", to be distracted in his efforts to make, in his own words, "avant-garde music that works", music that coheres. "I'm fragmented, but I do a lot. I try to, but I do it in quite a spasmodic way… It's like a dyspraxia or some fucking syndrome I probably have, I can't concentrate on one thing for too long," he says.

So far, it's working. More than this, early middle age (46) sits well with Dury. He comes across as a man comfortable in his own skin, and certainly a man who likes an anecdote, although sometimes you suspect his punchlines may be partly an effort to deflect attention. In France, he's already a star in the vein of Serge Gainsbourg, a highbrow troubadour valued for his wit and wisdom, and he's well on the way to achieving the same status elsewhere. He's learnt to be a larger-than-life version of himself, and to channel that knowledge into performing songs offering a bruised and battered take on the world.

So what if it hadn't worked out, what else might he have done? "I'd really like to have been a corrupt policeman, a really corrupted dodgy motherfucker," he says. "The last one, the untouchable one, I really would love to be that really-no-morals motherfucker, a real put your elbow against his epiglottis motherfucker." At which point, Baxter Dury, rather than jumping in a Jag and making like Jack Regan, heads for the Tube to get to a meeting. Sensible geezer. ●

B.E.D's new album is out now on Heavenly

MY LIFE IN VINYL

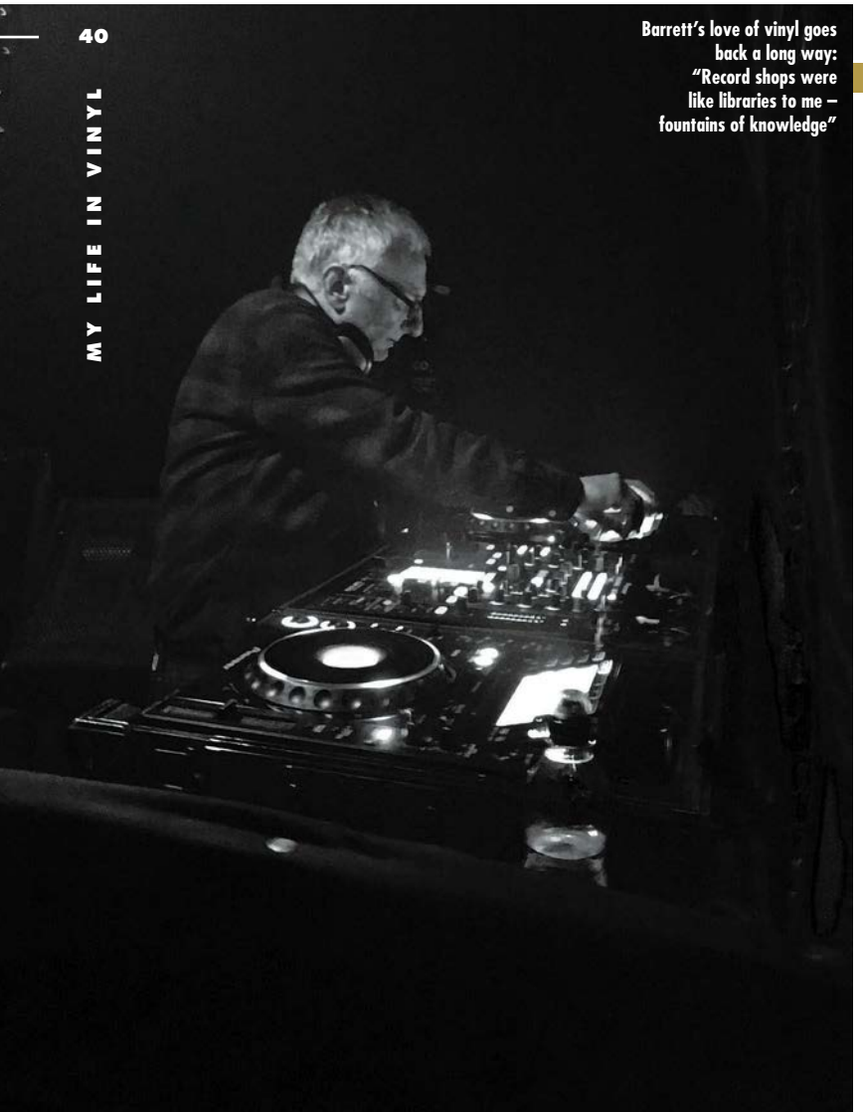
# JEFF BARRETT

Starting out as a singles buyer for a record shop, Jeff Barrett went on, via Revolver and Creation, to enduring success as founder of Heavenly Records. **Ben Wardle** visits Barrett's bar to find out more

"When I was at school, careers people would come round and say: 'What do you wanna do?' and I'd say: 'Work in a record shop'. All I wanted to do was work in a record shop. Back then, the mines were still open and they'd say: 'Have you thought about the pit?'"

Sipping his first pint and enjoying the unseasonably clement weather, Jeff Barrett sits opposite *LLV*, perched comfortably on a table outside his own gaff. Next year, The Social – Barrett's bar and venue, just round the corner from London's Oxford Circus – will be 20 years old. His label, Heavenly, is just shy of 30. We're here to celebrate the man's life through vinyl, but initially at least, the past is not high on Jeff's agenda: "We're doing good now. We're so strong now that I actually believe we're as good as we've ever been… so looking back isn't the thing, really – tomorrow's more important."

He's right. Despite lamenting that he hasn't had a band on BBC flagship music show *Later…* in 12 years, the month after we meet he'll be sitting on the set watching Jools introduce his current signings multilingual singer Gwenno and Cardiff psych-rock fourpiece Boy Azooga, as well as globe-straddling early signings Manic Street Preachers. Past releases include Saint Etienne, Beth Orton, Doves and The Magic Numbers, who



**Barrett's love of vinyl goes back a long way: "Record shops were like libraries to me – fountains of knowledge"**

Pics: Wendy Barrett

## DOVES
LOST SOULS

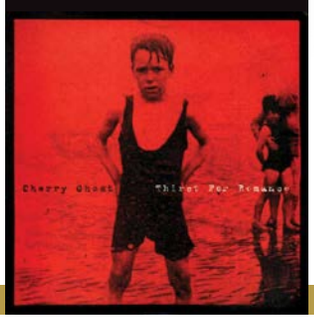
**UK 2000**
(Double vinyl) £167

A triumph for the EMI incarnation of Heavenly, this – along with their second and third albums, *The Last Broadcast* and *Some Cities* (both No. 1s) – is essential listening. Fourth album *Kingdom Of Rust* contains the magnificent title track, but is patchy. As Barrett says: "An amazing single, but you knew they were struggling to get on with each other at that point – they'd burned really intensely and worked really hard and they'd all grown up; kids, marriages, dead parents, and they were sick of each other…"

## CHERRY GHOST
THIRST FOR ROMANCE

**UK 2007**
(Double vinyl) £60

"I loved this to bits," says Jeff. Featuring the distinctive voice of Simon Aldred, this debut reached No. 7. Its follow up, *Beneath This Burning Shoreline*, didn't capitalise on the band's success and is one of only a few Heavenly LPs never released on vinyl.




Beth Orton Trailer Park

## BETH ORTON
TRAILER PARK

**UK 1996**
£40

Orton's Heavenly debut contains the beautiful *She Cries Your Name* co-written with her boyfriend, producer William Orbit. It was the next record, *Central Reservation*, which earned her a BRIT Award in 2000 for Best Female Artist.

## MANIC STREET PREACHERS
MOTOWN JUNK

**12" 1990**
£15

"They were so different. They had something to say, something to prove, plus they were smart and curious and daft and all very bloody lovely. *Motown Junk*, with its Public Enemy sample intro, was (and still is) electric."

together have racked up millions of sales. Not bad for someone who sees his career in a very straightforward manner. "I just like putting out records. If every day allows me to put a record out and meet supremely talented artists, then… I'm a fanboy, really.

"I'd been buying records since I was nine. The first single I bought was *Lookin' Through The Windows* by The Jackson 5, from Boots. I grew up on this council estate about five miles outside Nottingham and I was brought up with a work ethic. I had a paper round when I was 11 and 12; I liked records, so therefore I needed money… so I worked. Record shops were like libraries to me – fountains of knowledge; a place where you could go and learn about music, shoes, haircuts, trousers. I never wanted to be the drummer, but I wanted to be the first to get the record before anybody else!"

Barrett didn't waste time in making his dream of working in a record shop come true: while working at his brother's restaurant down in Plymouth, he quickly bagged a job at HMV. "I became singles buyer and I soon tapped into all the freaks. They all started coming up to buy New Order records. I'd buy five of The Pale Fountains' single and I'd sell 'em. And when *Hand In Glove* came out, I bought 10…"

Rather than simply placing orders for the sure-fire bankers of the day such as Shakin' Stevens and Bucks Fizz, Barrett was deciding on new acts he believed the public would go for, using just his taste and insider knowledge. This approach was exactly what he would go on to perfect with Heavenly, but back then it was HMV who were sole beneficiaries of his gift: "Word soon got out that we were selling more independent records than anywhere in that area of Britain."

Many of the singles he was buying were from Revolver Distribution and he developed a relationship with head honcho Mike Chadwick, who gave him a job working in the Bristol store run by the distributor.

"I had a reggae education from Mike Chadwick… I thought I knew reggae, but Mike taught me tons. I managed the Revolver shop for a year, which was the year that The Smiths' debut came out, Aztec Camera's debut came out, the Cocteaus were getting big, electro was coming in, Studio 1 reissues were amazing – I heard Marcia Griffiths' *Feel Like Jumping* for the first time."

**"I NEVER WANTED TO BE THE DRUMMER, BUT I WANTED TO BE THE FIRST TO GET THE RECORD BEFORE ANYBODY ELSE!"**

Also during that year, he started noticing records by a fledgling indie who had no truck with the traditional way of marketing. "Test pressings got sent to the distributor with a sales sheet, which was where you were supposed to write 'Peel Session booked; tour dates here; Radio 1 Session…' Alan's were like: 'This record's fucking amazing, so you'd better sell some for me, you cunt!' I thought, 'This is great!'"

The label was, of course, Alan McGee's Creation – and it was here that things began to accelerate. Before long, he was back in Plymouth promoting Creation acts at his own club. Soon afterwards, he moved to London to work for McGee's label, which by then was enjoying genuine success with The Jesus And Mary Chain. "Alan just threw me in at the deep end. 'Can you go and get this record cut? Can you take this record to Radio 1? Can you take this to the *NME*?!'"

## SAINT ETIENNE
FOXBASE ALPHA

**1991**
£20

Released through Creation on the Heavenly label, Bob Stanley and co.'s debut caught the early-90s zeitgeist of white-boy dance music. The band's singer Sarah Cracknell did not appear on their Heavenly debut, a plaintive cover of *Only Love Will Break Your Heart*, as she had yet to join. They were pipped to the Mercury Music Prize by Barrett's chums, Primal Scream.

Heavenly

### THE LOGO – WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

The late Paul Cannell designed the *Screamadelica* artwork, which is now regarded as one of the all-time classic sleeve designs. Alan McGee gave him a room above the Creation office to use as a design space and for a period during the early 90s, despite major addiction problems, Cannell managed to produce some great art.

"He did this specifically for us, it was bespoke," says Barrett. "I gave him two briefs: one of my favourite labels of all time is [songwriters] Leiber and Stoller's label, Red Bird. It had loads of girl groups, like The Shangri-Las and The Dixie Cups. Its logo is a cartoon red bird playing a lute. I told him I wanted something like that, which just says 'pop', and I also wanted it to be something that I could use without words."

Barrett looks down at the beer mat on the Social table which sports the famous logo. "And he came up with that, the crazy little fuck!" How did he get the etched woodblock effect? "He carved it out of a rubber eraser!"

Barrett's social skills meant he soon became Creation's press officer, representing the label's then-biggest band, The House Of Love. So adept was he that one week he convinced both *NME* and *Melody Maker* that they had an exclusive interview with the band and managed to bag simultaneous front covers in both papers. At the same time, he started promoting a club night at The Black Horse in Camden: "That's where The House Of Love really cut their teeth; the Mondays played there; Felt did a secret gig… We created a scene."

One band, however, that he couldn't even get arrested ("Believe me, we tried!") was Primal Scream. They'd just made the follow-up to their Byrdsian debut and the press hated it. Alan McGee was not happy and, according to Jeff, would say: "Barrett! Get us some press, otherwise I'm fucking sacking you!" The one person who did like the album was Jeff's new friend, a bloke called Andy Weatherall, who DJ'd at acid-house club Phuture and wrote for hipster fanzine *Boy's Own*. Barrett went on to manage Weatherall for 11 years. "The second Primal Scream record is a boring rock record, but I gave it to Weatherall and he loved the two ballads." He tipped the LP in *Boy's Own*, and then attended a meeting with the band organised by Barrett. They "got on famously" and decided to do a mix of one of the "boring rock" ballads, *I'm Losing More Than I'll Ever Have*. "It took them a few goes," he says. "But what they came out with changed shit."

The 'shit' that this remix changed was not just Primal Scream's own direction, not just Creation's fortunes, but also rock music itself: finally, alternative rock and dance music began to fuse and work together. In Barrett's head, though, they'd always co-existed… The remix was *Loaded*.

So was Barrett responsible for the indie-dance boom that opened up a new future for rock? Jeff is typically self-effacing: "If I have to talk about highlights of my 'career'," he says, putting air-inverted commas around the word, "when did I learn to become an A&R guy? It wasn't by putting Andrew Weatherall and Primal Scream together – that was just me saying to Bobby and Innes: 'You gotta come to Phuture, there's a great DJ there!'"

> "HEAVENLY IS A WORD THAT APPEARS IN SOME OF MY FAVOURITE SONGS. WHETHER IT'S SHOUT TO THE TOP OR BLUE MONDAY, IT'S THERE"

When Revolver's Mike Chadwick decided he wanted an in-house label, Barrett was his first choice. "Mike said: 'You do the A&R, I'll do the cash, we'll go 50/50 on the profits and ownerships – what do you want to call it?' 'Heavenly' is a word that appears in some of my favourite songs. Whether it's *Shout To The Top* or *Blue Monday*, it's there. It's a state of consciousness and it's a nice word."

The first Heavenly Recordings releases were by artists inspired by the 'shit' that *Loaded* had changed. After a first release by Weatherall-produced Sly And Lovechild, Heavenly's roster added indie-dance scenesters Flowered Up and future meta-popsters Saint Etienne. Barrett's A&R talent and charm with writers resulted in a press frenzy for both. With his next signing, everything went into overdrive: Monmouthshire quartet Manic Street Preachers polarised the press and brought major labels out in force. "It wasn't my idea to get a deal with a major – I'd never even thought about it," he says. But Heavenly had already outgrown

Revolver and needed to fund their releases somehow. Flowered Up had signed to London Records, but Barrett liked Sony. "I met [MD] Rob Stringer and he liked to talk music. All I've ever wanted to do was put records out, so when somebody offers me the opportunity to do that, I'll do it – and that's what Sony did."

Indeed, after the first Sony incarnation, it was Heavenly's major-label joint ventures – first with BMG-funded dance label Deconstruction, and then with EMI – that produced a crystalline run of classic releases. With Deconstruction, Barrett achieved critical and commercial success with folk singer Beth Orton, with whom he believes he earned his A&R stripes.

"We'd stay up all night listening to Spector and Shadow Morton records, Brill Building songs, Dusty and The Shirelles… It was the first time I'd ever been so involved in working alongside an artist in the making of a record and it was a good feeling when it connected." Vindication came when Orton won a BRIT Award for the label in 2000.

That same year, Heavenly did a deal with EMI and swiftly netted Manchester's Doves, who went on to deliver two No. 1 albums full of their yearning, northern-soul rock. But major-label-sponsored success came with a price: West Coast harmony-infused fourpiece The Magic Numbers would go on to become Heavenly's biggest commercial success, selling 1.2 million albums, but EMI almost scuppered the deal.

**"ALL I'VE EVER WANTED TO DO WAS PUT RECORDS OUT, SO WHEN I'M OFFERED THE OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT, I'LL DO IT – AND THAT'S WHAT SONY DID"**

"The demos were great. We went to see them at The Water Rats in King's Cross and Martin and I thought they were amazing. We wanted to do a sensible deal for a mini album, and the band were up for it. But EMI said it was too retro. I lost it. I said: 'This is a really good group, this is the flipside to that dark spoon of Pete fucking Doherty, this is happiness in a bottle, they're gig-ready, they're song-ready, they're record-ready – let's get them playing, let's spread the love!' Sure enough, two days later, Sony saw them and put loads more money on the table. We had to pay way more in the end…"

The ultimate end to the EMI relationship came much later when, before the financial crash of 2008, businessman Guy Hands bought the company. Jeff remembers seeing a picture of Hands in the newspaper: "I said to Martin: 'That's the guy; he's going to unplug the jukebox and not do us all a favour!'. Then he sent his stooges in to find out what he'd actually bought – so we were iced for a year."

Finding solace in the countryside, Barrett nonetheless found his work ethic kicking in and he soon started literary website and publisher Caught By The River, a venture which continues today. But it wasn't long before he began the current incarnation of Heavenly, doing everything independently.

Heavenly's roster is now packed with artists from all over the world – a testament to the difference the internet makes to A&R. His biggest band, King Gizzard & The Lizard Wizard, are from Australia. Didn't

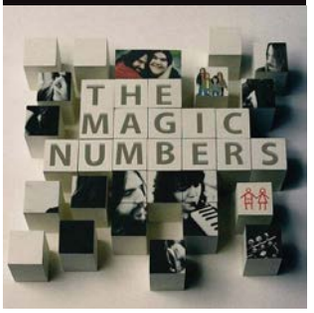
Barrett with Heavenly's Katherine Cantwell

**ED HARCOURT**
MAPLEWOOD
**2000**
£60

Given his finely honed tunes and soaring vocal, it's surprising that Harcourt – who released four albums on Heavenly – didn't sell more records. If you've never heard him, this EP is a great place to start although all of his records, including his Mercury-nominated debut *Here Be Monsters*, are easily accessible.

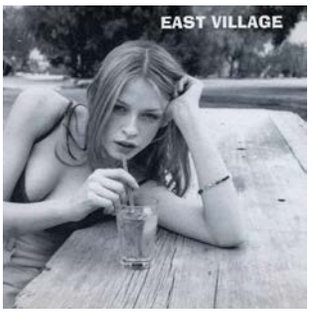
**THE MAGIC NUMBERS**
THE MAGIC NUMBERS
**2005**
£45

Jeff on their hard-won success: "We sold 1.2 million records, so it all came out in the wash, but it [EMI not wanting to let Heavenly sign them] was the stupidest thing. And when it went off, it was crazy."



## KING GIZZARD & THE LIZARD WIZARD
I'M IN YOUR MIND FUZZ
**2014**
£20

"They're probably my biggest group right now," says Barrett. "As daft and as dumb as they're trying to make out with the name, it's really sophisticated."




## EAST VILLAGE
DROP OUT
**2013**
£60

East Village was home to brothers Martin and Paul Kelly. Martin went on to become Barrett's partner in Heavenly and manage Saint Etienne, while Paul designed many Heavenly sleeves and is now a film director for Heavenly Films [run by Martin]. Barrett released their records on pre-Heavenly label Sub Aqua. "He's a very important part of the story," he says of Martin, "we haven't been together for nine years now, but he's my best mate."

## GWENNO
LE KOV
**2018**

Ludicrously talented singer, songwriter, dancer and actor Gwenno Saunders has released two albums on Heavenly so far: the first, *Y Dydd Olaf*, in her native Welsh and this, in Cornish. Her solo music is markedly different from her previous incarnation in indie-pop girl group The Pipettes – but relax… despite comprehension issues for non-Welsh or Cornish speakers, both albums are supremely accessible.

the novelty name put him off? "Yes, you can usually avoid the admission fee by clocking the name – and that's a howler! James Endeacott, my mate [ex-Rough Trade A&R, who signed The Libertines] was into them; I said to him: 'That's a fucking shocking name, James, it's going to be hard to get me to listen to them!' I mean… even if they'd just been called King Gizzard, I would have said fuck off! But James has got great taste, so I was never going to totally dismiss it… One day, a clip went up on Facebook of *Head On/Pill* – I liked the slash! I liked the title, but I really liked the slash. The song was 13 minutes long and it was so good… I bought the album, but the cut was really compressed, so I said to our head of A&R, Danny: 'Why don't we see if we can get this track and cut it really loud onto a one-sided 12?' It sold out really fast; it was one of the first to go up on eBay for daft dough. I said to Danny, there's something going on with this group…"

Indeed, it is his continued loyalty to vinyl that is deeply refreshing about Jeff. "We never stopped doing vinyl. There's probably two records in my entire catalogue that didn't come out on vinyl. I believe in the album. An artist makes an album, right? CDs fuck things up. Look at 70s records – you've got enough time to build a joint while Side One's playing – and smoke it. And then you turn it over and you can do the same again."

But what about getting vinyl manufactured in a marketplace that now includes Sainsbury's and Tescos? "Thankfully, there's another pressing plant fully operational out of Poland now. I've got this act called Mattiel from Atlanta – it's fucking good, like vintage rock 'n' roll soul – that record would've come out earlier if I could press vinyl quick enough…"

As yet more pints arrive at the table, it becomes clear that we could sit and talk about music forever. *LLV*'s favourite act on the current Heavenly roster is another Aussie pop-dance duo, Confidence Man, and at the mention of their name, Barrett is off again. "The album is brilliant! She gives it a load of dominatrix and he gives a load of tight pants and they're really funny. Their craftsmanship is amazing. There's one song called *Out The Window* – and Weatherall is like, is it too obvious for me to say: 'Can I remix this?' I said: 'Fucking have it, mate!' He utterly loves them." Despite being in their 20s, Confidence Man are fans of Andy Weatherall. "*Loaded* to them is like listening to Tamla or something…" muses Jeff. He imagines what that initial conversation between Primal Scream and Andy Weatherall was like 29 years ago. "They probably talked about The Fire Engines… 13th Floor Elevators… King Tubby… 23 Skidoo."

**"WE NEVER STOPPED DOING VINYL. THERE ARE MAYBE TWO RECORDS IN MY CATALOGUE THAT DIDN'T COME OUT ON VINYL. I BELIEVE IN THE ALBUM"**

Watching someone doing exactly what they most enjoy is a pleasure and for Jeff, more than anything, it's releasing shiny bits of plastic impregnated with sound. "I've never wanted to be a svengali – I think I've helped groups more by being a label bloke. There's things I've passed on that would have made me more money, but I don't regret them. And, luckily, I haven't worked with many twats – I mean, most of them have been fine in all these years – really fine! I'm surprised… in 28 years." ●

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# *Beggars &* 1968 KINGS

After *Sgt. Pepper's…* triumphed over *Their Satanic Majesties Request* in 1967's psychedelia battle, the aftermath saw The Beatles and The Rolling Stones react very differently for the follow-ups. While The Beatles did whatever they damn well pleased, Mick Jagger and Keith Richards realised they had to get much tighter. With new 50th Anniversary editions of *The Beatles (The White Album)* and *Beggars Banquet*, **John Earls** traces their fraught history…

There's a memorable moment in the *Anthology* TV series where the surviving Beatles and George Martin are asked if *The White Album* would have been better as a single record. Ringo Starr suggests it should have come out as two separate albums – "*The White Album* and *The Whiter Album*"; George Harrison admits some songs should have been "elbowed off" or saved for B-sides; Martin in particular sternly insists it should have been "condensed into a very, very good single album".

Paul McCartney is having none of it. Eulogising its eclecticism, he tetchily recites the counter-arguments. Then, in a very rare moment of Macca publicly losing his shit, he declares: "It's great! It sold! It's The Beatles' bloody *White Album*! Shut up!" Even Martin, who plainly thinks his charges had run amok by 1968, demurs: "A lot of people I know think it's The Beatles' best album," before adding in that familiarly unflappable Edwardian schoolmasterly tone: "It's not my view, but horses for courses."

What's clear from the Super Deluxe boxset of the new 50th Anniversary Edition is that *The White Album* could have been even longer – there are an additional 12 original songs that didn't make it on to the finished album, of which only *The Inner Light* was relegated to a B-side. As Harrison summarised in *Anthology*: "That's the problem when you've got so many songs.

UPDATING THE CLASSICS

# THE WHITER ALBUM

Alex Lake

Abbey Road's researchers combed the vaults in August 2017 for the outtakes and sessions included with the new *White Album* update. Work began on the new mix of the main album in February, with Giles Martin and Sam Okell again working with Abbey Road mastering engineer Miles Showell.

"*The White Album* was never a good-sounding record," says Showell. "You can speculate forever whether that's because of too many hands on the mixing desk, or if it's because eight-track machines were just coming in and it was the recording challenges of the day. But Giles and Sam have done a spectacular job with this new mix – it doesn't sound like a 50-year-old record. My job was to just not fuck it up; to keep it sounding exciting, fresh and punchy."

As with *Sgt. Pepper's…*, the trio used multitrack tapes rather than the original masters, with the exception of *Revolution 9*. "We thought, 'There's not much you can do with that one', as it's a piece of abstract art. You'd be crazy to try to replicate that." Using digital workstations, the team went through the four-track and eight-track recordings of *The White Album* to separate out the various instruments' tracks. Showell explains: "On a four-track, you'd glue the bass and drums together, to free up three more tracks for other stuff. What we can do now is unstick everything, layer by layer like an onion, so you can then develop a far more natural sound."

Thankfully, George Harrison kept the four-track tapes of the *Esher Demos*. "Those have been widely bootlegged," says Showell. "But they were always terrible copies at the wrong speed, and sounded awful. George's widow Olivia gave us the four-tracks – they're not super high-grade quality like the studio sessions, but to get demos that good from 50 years ago is incredible. George was pretty good at looking after his history, he has shelves and shelves of stuff. I wonder what else he kept…"

The new mixes took six months, with Martin, Okell and Showell sending each song to Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Yoko Ono and Olivia Harrison for approval. "The anniversary editions are The Beatles' idea," says Showell. "They have total control. If they're happy with Giles and Sam's mix, it comes to me for mastering and then goes back to the four Beatles. If anything then comes up that can't be fixed with a tweaked version, it gets stopped and we can grind to a halt for a few weeks. The album was finally done in July, which was a month after the final, final, final delivery date. Which is a case of 'twas ever thus, as The Beatles like to push it."

Digital technology advances coincided with the anniversary of *Sgt. Pepper's…*, and Showell would now like to see the anniversary editions go back through The Beatles' catalogue. He points out *Abbey Road* already sounds excellent, while *Let It Be… Naked* revisited that album. "Technically, we could go as far back as *A Hard Day's Night*," Showell says. "I'm not the one in control of these decisions, but a Super Deluxe edition of *Revolver*? Yes, please!"

## MARTIN, OKELL AND SHOWELL SENT EACH SONG TO MCCARTNEY, STARR, YOKO ONO AND OLIVIA HARRISON

**The 4LP boxset of *The White Album* 50th Anniversary edition includes the *Esher Demos*, a poster and portraits**

Are you going to get rid of them so you can write more songs? There was a lot of ego in the band."

Never mind the band – even with the perspective of 50 years' hindsight, no two Beatles fans can agree exactly which songs should be cut in order to end up with the perfect single album. That The Beatles were able to collectively conjure up 50 songs in a year when they were supposedly starting to come apart at the seams is testament to how individually creative they remained, and to the benefits of their competitive nature. Or, just maybe, that the band's relationships weren't as strained as the narrative of their break-up would

© Calderstone Productions Limited

**Left: EMI's *Long, Long, Long* tape box from October 1968. Right: The *Jet & Piston Engine Aeroplane* tape, used for *Back In The U.S.S.R.***

like to tidily portray. *The White Album* engineer Ken Scott has long protested that there was no more bad blood in the studio than with any other recording session.

At a talk in Nashville to promote his 2014 autobiography *Abbey Road To Ziggy Stardust*, Scott – who went on to produce David Bowie – said: "The stories of their acrimony are utter rubbish," adding: "So many albums back in the day took two weeks to record. At one point in those two weeks, the artistic temperament comes up and someone gets mad. If it happens on a two-week album, then on a six-month project like *The White Album*, it's going to happen more than once. That's all it was – the artistic temperament going: 'I want it my way!' It wasn't them obliterating each other because they hated each other." Scott's view seems backed up by the studio chat featured in the 50th Anniversary Edition. Across its outtakes and session tracks, as well as the finally official *Esher Demos* recorded at Harrison's Surrey home, is much of the laughter and in-jokes familiar to any Beatles collector.

The most concrete counter-argument to the folklore that *The White Album* marks The Beatles' disintegration came from George Martin. In the wake of their split, John Lennon claimed: "*The White Album* is the sound of the band breaking up." Shortly before Lennon's murder, Martin visited him in New York, asking him: "Why did you say that? I thought you were all fine then." Lennon's response: "What do you mean? I was high! I said all sorts of crazy stuff then."

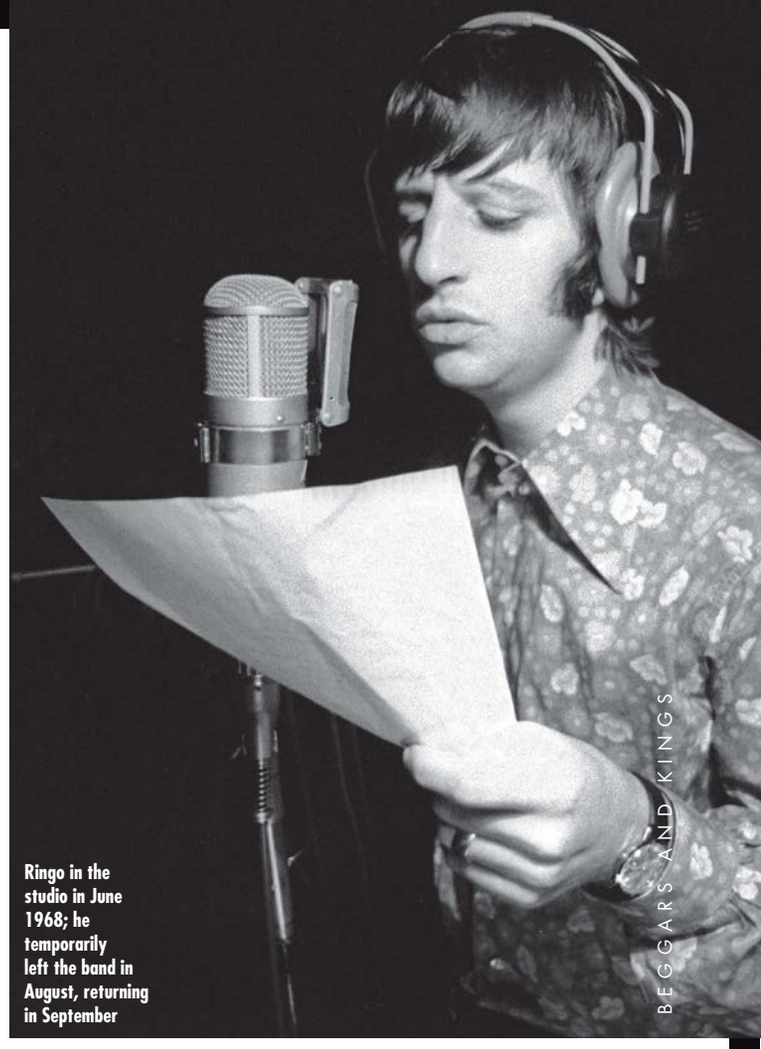
## OLYMPIC STRUGGLE

If The Beatles' various talents were diversifying in ways even a double album was struggling to contain, The Rolling Stones needed a unifying vision after falling victims to their own excess. Next to *Sgt. Pepper's…*, the florid *Their Satanic Majesties Request* looked like a sketch-show spoof of alternative culture. Their solution was to get back to basics and keep its follow-up to 10 taut songs. It initially seemed a vision Brian Jones would be immersed fully in. The Stones' then-new tape-op Phill Brown recalls Jones' presence while Jimi Hendrix recorded at their shared recording space, Olympic Studios in London, in January '68.

"Brian seemed really good then," Brown remembers. "He was a little overweight, but he looked great in his white suit – very much the rock 'n' roller." By April, when work on *Beggars Banquet* began, Jones was a totally different character. According to Brown: "He was very sweaty, he'd put on more weight, he was definitely at least drinking and he'd become emotionally detached. I know he had a tricky personality, that he was someone who could be violent and aggressive, but I've always felt slightly sorry for the guy."

As Brown puts it: "By that point, Jagger and Richards were very much in control." They already had songs they could be rightly confident about, with Brown recalling *Factory Girl* and *No Expectations* as instantly ▶

THE BEATLES' VARIOUS TALENTS WERE DIVERSIFYING IN WAYS EVEN A DOUBLE ALBUM WAS STRUGGLING TO CONTAIN

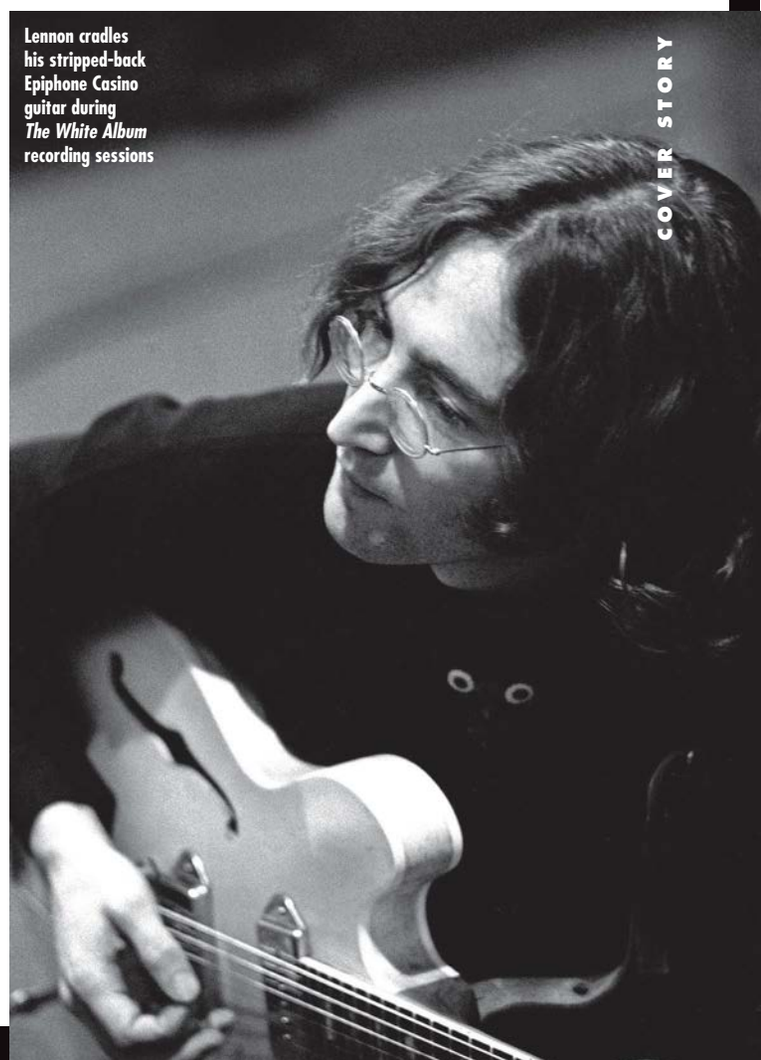


**Ringo in the studio in June 1968; he temporarily left the band in August, returning in September**









**Lennon cradles his stripped-back Epiphone Casino guitar during *The White Album* recording sessions**

**The newly remastered 50th Anniversary Edition of *Beggars Banquet* features a flexi disc and a mono 12" of *Sympathy For The Devil***



UPDATING THE CLASSICS

# DEVIL IN THE DETAILS

The Rolling Stones' classic albums have already been remastered in 2002, but advances in technology mean they have been further revised for *Their Satanic Majesties Request* last year and now *Beggars Banquet*. "We have sources that weren't available 16 years ago, and we're constantly researching what the best equipment is to use," says Teri Landi, chief audio engineer at the Stones' label, ABKCO.

The Stones' master tapes are generally in good condition, including for *Beggars Banquet*, but Landi admits: "There were a few issues that needed dealing with, even fresh ones since 2002. Sometimes, a tape will track fine but won't 16 years later and has developed a problem, even though it's done nothing but sit in the tape box in the storage vault."

The main extras in the *Beggars Banquet* vinyl boxset presented differing challenges. The 12" of *Sympathy For The Devil* is presented in mono, following the success of 2016's *In Mono* boxset, which Landi oversaw. "*Beggars Banquet* is the last Stones album to be released in mono," she explains. "But *Sympathy For The Devil* is the only song on there that was truly mixed in mono – the others were fold-downs from the stereo versions. *Beggars Banquet* was only released in stereo in the States, and, of course, new generations will be owning *Beggars Banquet* for the first time. That song sounds totally different in mono, it'll amaze people."

Also included is a flexi disc featuring a nine-minute interview with Mick Jagger conducted by an exec at the Stones' Japanese label King Records. It was previously available only with the Japanese pressing of the album and, remarkably, the interview's audio never made it online. "It amazes me nobody has thought to put it up there, given you can see the rarest Stones bootlegs online," Landi acknowledges.

The only company which still makes flexi discs is huge Czech pressing plant GZ. "There was a lot of back-and-forth over the challenges of cutting a flexi disc," says Landi. "You're dealing with a thinner plastic, so your groove can't be too wide or too deep. The easy way out would have been to put it on a regular 7". But there's a novelty where you lose your inner audiophile and go: 'This is pretty cool!'."

Despite repeated attempts, tracking down the flexi disc's original interviewer proved impossible. "He asks some pretty pedestrian questions," Landi admits. "But Jagger has some great, funny responses."

Presumably, we can expect a 50th Anniversary Edition of *Let It Bleed* next year? "I can't talk about that stuff," protests Landi. "But every year that comes along, you've got to look and see what's significant. An iconic album turning 50 is always worth celebrating."

"SOMETIMES, A TAPE WILL TRACK FINE BUT WON'T 16 YEARS LATER… EVEN THOUGH IT'S DONE NOTHING BUT SIT IN THE TAPE BOX IN THE VAULT"

ready. So too was *Street Fighting Man*, though Brown recalls: "It was fairly fully formed, but as often happens, they couldn't get the same vibe as on the demo. In the end, the demo was dumped onto one track of an eight-track machine and they just added things to that. That's why there's a lot of wow-and-flutter to how *Street Fighting Man* sounds recorded."

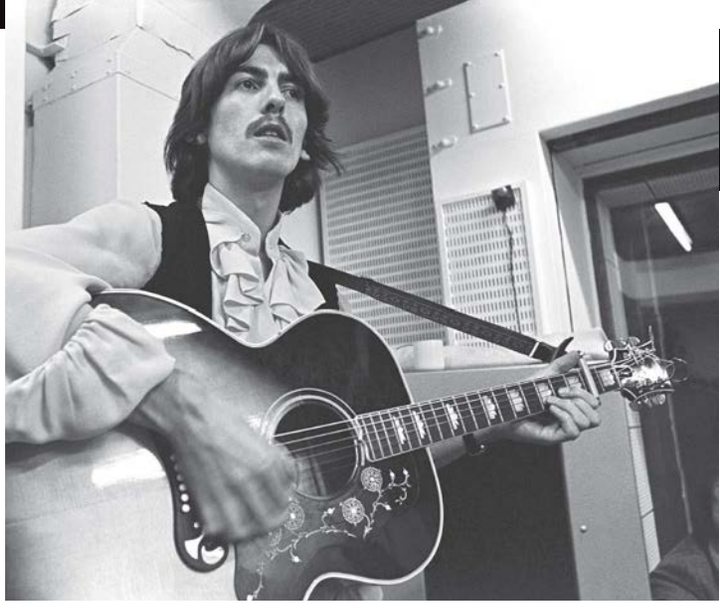
## IN AT THE DEEP END

Brown was just 17 at the time of recording, ensuring the tape machine was running for engineer Glyn Johns, with Jimmy Miller producing the Stones for the first time. "I'd been told: 'Don't speak unless you're spoken to' by Olympic's owner Keith Grant when I first started work there – that was the attitude back then," Brown explains. "Charlie Watts was very easy and always having a laugh, and just got on with doing what he does, while Bill Wyman is very quiet. That's what you need next to intense elements like Jagger and Richards – relaxed guys who don't immediately react to the first thing that's said to them. I was wary of Richards, after a photographer friend said he's like an animal waiting to bite. I had a lot of respect for him and Jagger, but I kept my distance from them."

> "THE DEMO WAS DUMPED ONTO ONE TRACK OF AN EIGHT-TRACK MACHINE AND THEY JUST ADDED THINGS TO THAT"

Brown wasn't the only youngster making classic albums at the time: Ken Scott and fellow *The White Album* engineer Chris Thomas were both 21. This wasn't the only startling aspect about the decision to elevate Thomas to producer when George Martin went on holiday: Thomas had never actually produced anyone

**Despite his centrality to this publicity shot, Brian Jones departed the Stones soon after the recording of *Beggars Banquet***



Harrison wrote one song on each side of *The White Album*

before, so of course, his first job would be with the biggest band of all time. It kickstarted a stellar career that saw him produce Roxy Music, the Sex Pistols and Pulp, as well as mix *The Dark Side Of The Moon*.

On his first day nominally in charge, The Beatles "completely ignored" Thomas, with John Lennon heard to mutter: "He's not really doing his job, is he?" Fearing he was about to get sacked, later that afternoon, Thomas spotted a technical mistake the band had missed – and thus finally had their trust. By then, four months into recording, during his three weeks in charge, Thomas produced *Happiness Is A Warm Gun*, *Birthday* and *Piggies*.

Thomas told *Mix*: "I've never really said I've 'produced' The Beatles, as that sounds incredibly presumptuous. But I did help on that record, and I played on a few songs. I was very fortunate in having ridiculous fantasies come true!"

The Beatles recorded *Dear Prudence, Savoy Truffle* and *Martha My Dear* in the eight-track and Dolby-equipped Trident Studios in Soho

Thomas should be commended for the speed at which he worked, as progress up until then had been slow. Miles Showell, the mastering engineer who worked on the new Anniversary Edition with Giles Martin, says: "Giles' father told him that he felt he'd lost control of the classroom by *The White Album*. It's them rebelling and running the show. Some songs took 104 takes before The Beatles got them where they wanted the song to be, which isn't a lot of fun for the engineers."

## LIVE HARMONY

One aspect of *The White Album* that's easy to ignore among its barrage of songs is how sparse they are after *Sgt. Pepper's…*. Though they never did tour again, it appeared it was something they were thinking about, as McCartney confirmed to the *Daily Express* on its release: "After *Sgt. Pepper's…*, we've tried to play more like a band this time, only using instruments where we have to." Asked if that was with a view to playing live again, McCartney said: "Yeah. And also, it's that we like playing together. That's the main concept." Given that the album

"WE'VE TRIED TO PLAY MORE LIKE A BAND THIS TIME, ONLY USING INSTRUMENTS WHERE WE HAVE TO"

Getty

**Jones and Jagger jamming an early version of *Sympathy For The Devil*. The song's evolution was captured in Jean-Luc Godard's film *One Plus One***

was often recorded with only two Beatles present at any one time, it's an interesting claim. *Revolution 9* apart, you could play most of its songs live and together as a band. It could, of course, be that McCartney was trotting out PR speak to keep up the idea of the band's togetherness. But, once Ringo was welcomed back via a drumkit bedecked with flowers after he quit for a fortnight, it seemed none of the four Beatles wanted to take each other for granted again.

Jones apart, the Stones were harmonious during *Beggars Banquet* – despite the added pressure of film director Jean-Luc Godard's crew. Godard wanted to demystify the recording process yet, in choosing to film the making of *Sympathy For The Devil* for his documentary *One Plus One*, he picked one of the most mysterious songs ever made. "That song had a lot of changes and jamming of ideas before it came together," explains Phill Brown, who says the key to perfecting it was switching Wyman to percussion so Richards could play its bassline. "Watching Godard's film is interesting, because working with Glyn Johns to get it right, it was a fairly low-key and determined process."

MY TAKE ON… *THE WHITE ALBUM*

# THE ANCHORESS

Acclaimed for her 2016 debut *Confessions Of A Romance Novelist* and a guest on Manic Street Preachers' LP *Resistance Is Futile*, The Anchoress explains her love for *The White Album*

Alan Wild

"Like most people's relationship with The Beatles, there was no precise moment of 'discovery' for me. They were just sort of always there: in my parents' record collection, on the radio, or sung in the school choir. But *The White Album* was something different. To make an analogy: if *Sgt. Pepper's…* was their ubiquitous moment of mass popularity – their *Wuthering Heights* – then *The White Album* was like Kate Bush's experimental masterpiece *The Dreaming*. It felt like, to be a proper 'serious' Beatles fan, you had to dive in and immerse yourself in the incoherence of this difficult double album.

"*The White Album* was the record me and my best friend would endlessly argue about: which songs should have been left off? Was it even a proper Beatles album, or more of a patchworked rehearsal for their individual solo careers? And is there anyone in the known universe who actually likes *Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da*?

"When I finally bought my own copy at university, I'd listen to the double CD on a loop while writing my weekly tutorial essays. The continuous segue of one song into another and the oddball music-hall influences must have crept into my subconscious from all those repeated listenings, because they'd later vomit themselves back up again on my debut album as The Anchoress. *The White Album*'s insistence on adopting no one singular style has also hugely influenced my own 'jukebox' approach to songwriting, as well as my tendency to eBay binge on esoteric instrumentation from harpsichords to flugelhorns.

"There are those people who argue for a more slimline edit, but it's precisely this rattlebag of styles and competing influences that makes it my favourite Beatles album, showcasing what each member of the band has to offer as they grew increasingly apart as a creative unit. The upside of a fractious dynamic in the studio is also something I've emulated. As a record of Lennon and McCartney's growing antipathy towards each other, *The White Album* exemplifies what was so vital about their writing partnership – egging each other on while competing in a way that, for me, could never quite be replicated in their solo careers.

"But in the midst of all this increasing individuation is one uniting thread: the use of their trademark backing vocals as an arrangement tool. Their musical magpie-ing ranges from the parodic vocal hooks on *Sexy Sadie* – which I've always felt lampoon the early incarnation of the Fab Four – to the Beach Boys-esque 'Dah-dahs' on *Back In The USSR*.

"No one can agree which songs don't belong on this collection. Without the fragmented half-songs of *Wild Honey Pie* or the loop experiments of *Revolution 9*, you don't get a comprehensive picture of where the band were headed creatively. Like T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the fragmentary nature of *The White Album* is reflected in the band's interpersonal dynamics at the time, as much as it's a sonic sign of the times. As a palimpsest of the breakdown of The Beatles, it's ironic that *The White Album* has become the Beatles album that most people relish arguing about…"

*The Anchoress is currently working on her second album, due out spring 2019*

Jagger and Richards record *Sympathy For The Devil* in Olympic Studios in London

Getty

That's true, although the film crew itself also managed to contribute to Stones lore. Jagger's then-girlfriend Marianne Faithfull scrawled "Burn baby burn" in backwards writing on a mirror to inspire him – only for the studio to be aflame within minutes, as Jagger looked up to see a diffusive film light, placed in the ceiling by Godard's crew, had caught fire. Did that really happen? "Yes!" protests Brown. "Though I'm not totally convinced it was *Sympathy For The Devil* which Mick was doing lead vocals on at the time. Jimmy Miller yelled at me: 'Right, roll off the tapes!' and left with the masters in a taxi, in case the fire got even worse."

The blaze left a gaping hole in the studio roof, which wasn't ideal, as Olympic Studios is on the flightpath to Heathrow Airport. "The mics would pick up the drones from passing planes," says Brown. "It wasn't too bad if we were doing rock songs at night, but anything acoustic or orchestral during the day was a problem. I don't think any planes got onto tape, and we got pretty good at going: 'Okay, let's wait two minutes', while planes flew over."

During downtime, the Stones played a lot of table tennis: "Jagger is pretty good," reckons Brown. "Charlie is deceptively good, too."

## EDGE OF DARKNESS

*Beggars Banquet* marked the end of Brian Jones' involvement, as he was sacked from the band he'd started soon after recording finished in June. "Brian was the best musician in the band," Brown insists. "He could pick up any instrument and get it to work. With me, he was always polite and gentle, enthusiastic about getting something from every instrument. *No Expectations* is special on that album, because you could sense Brian coming out of his fog to play that amazing slide-guitar solo.

"It's a great record, with no weak songs and great performances. It was really exciting seeing Maz Faithfull and the other backing singers, pointing at the air for their key changes," Brown remembers. "*Beggars Banquet* was right on the edge, and I think that comes across on the record."

Ruthless as they were with Jones, *Beggars Banquet* marks the start of The Rolling Stones' imperious phase of albums. Whatever the truth of *The White Album*, afterwards, The Beatles were never the same. ●

JAGGER LOOKED UP TO SEE A DIFFUSIVE FILM LIGHT, PLACED IN THE CEILING BY GODARD'S CREW, HAD CAUGHT FIRE

MY TAKE ON… BEGGARS BANQUET

## JUSTIN YOUNG, THE VACCINES

The Vaccines first supported the Stones at Hyde Park in 2013. Singer Justin Young assesses the influence of *Beggars Banquet*

"Rolling Stones records weren't the kind of albums I remember coming into my life. Growing up, they were always there – as deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric as a spilled glass of Grand Cru at Nellcôte. Much like The Beatles and Bob Dylan, I filed their name and songs next to nursery rhymes and hymns – as old and as ubiquitous as *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star* or *Jerusalem*.

"I'm sure *Street Fighting Man* would have been the first song from *Beggars Banquet* to hook me in – I'm not ashamed to say that singles often are the first tracks to grab me. There have been very few recording sessions I've been involved in during my adult life where we haven't referenced *Street Fighting Man*'s blown-out acoustic guitar sound.

"*Beggars Banquet* is definitely not my favourite Stones album. It's probably behind *Exile On Main St.*, *Some Girls* and *Sticky Fingers* for me. Some of the more acoustic songs haven't aged particularly well, and sound pretty by-numbers by today's standards. But I still think of it as a really important record for so many reasons. I feel as though I'm listening to the biggest, most important rock band of the 20th century find their own unique voice, which is so exciting, and its rootsy feel off the back of the excess of *Their Satanic Majesties Request* probably represents the shift of power away from Brian Jones and towards how we think of them today – as Mick and Keith's band.

"We've been lucky enough to support the Stones on more than one occasion, and they absolutely schooled us. With that many good songs, it's easy to turn up and be self-fulfillingly brilliant. But the passion and energy they put in every time is testament to why they've been where they've been for so long. We have a song on our latest album called *Rolling Stones*. It's not really even a tribute – its lyrics are: "When your house is as big as The Rolling Stones" because, in my mind, few things in the last 50 years have been as big or as well built as the Stones. It's pretty mind-bending to think *Beggars Banquet* is 50 years old. I guess good music lasts forever. It's immortal – there to be discovered and rediscovered over and over. That's why for me making music, and listening to it, is so compelling."

*The Vaccines' new album, Combat Sports, is out now on Columbia Records*

Brad Elterman

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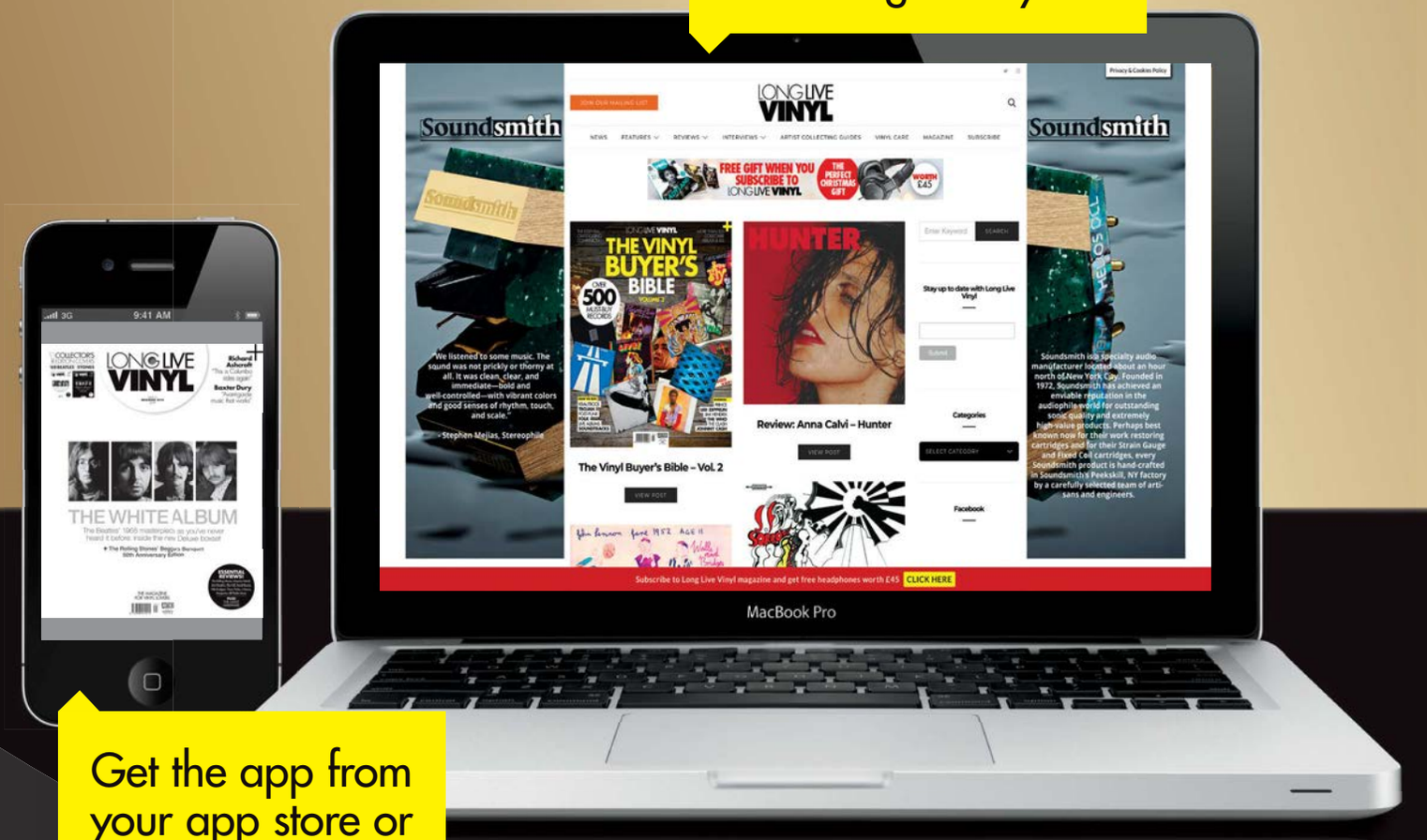


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# NEW CREATION

The brainchild of The Charlatans' singer Tim Burgess, O Genesis could have been another rockstar vanity label. Instead, over the last seven years, it's become an important home for maverick musicians whose outsider art would otherwise struggle to find a home. Burgess tells **John Earls** of impulsive releases and how running a label has honed his secretarial skills…

There's a long-standing debate as to whether The Charlatans qualify as a Manchester band – half of them are from the West Midlands – but it's no surprise the city's Factory Records was a key influence on Tim Burgess when he started his own record label, O Genesis, in 2011.

Not only did Burgess hire New Order sleeve overlord Peter Saville to design O Genesis' logo, the singer also copied Factory head Tony Wilson's vision that every O Genesis catalogue number was important – even if it wasn't anything to do with the music. In the same way FAC51 was The Haçienda club and FAC81 was a Factory board meeting, so too OGen11 is a badge of Saville's logo, while OGen34 is a letter from The KLF's Bill Drummond politely declining an invite to record anything for Burgess. "I knew it was unlikely Bill Drummond would say yes," admits Burgess, who has also given OGen catalogue numbers to the label's poster and standard record contract. "So long as we got a response from Bill, we could give him a catalogue number."

As well as Factory, Burgess admired Postcard, Crass, Alternative Tentacles and Creation when he was growing up in Cheshire. "Catalogue numbers, like Factory and Crass had, was the first thing I thought of when people mentioned record labels to me," he explains. "Then it was the artwork, and then it'd be a few of the records. I wanted something similar when I started O Genesis: good cataloguing, nice artwork. And I could help with producing the records. I wanted to sign nice people and to like what they were about as an artist."

## ONE TO ANOTHER

As part of that "nice people" ethos, Burgess generally lets his signings recommend other artists to the label, rather than have any formal A&R network. Respected gloom-rock duo Grumbling Fur's multi-instrumentalist Daniel O'Sullivan released his solo album *Veld* through O Genesis last year; in turn, O'Sullivan recommended newest signings The Silver Field to the label. "Artists like Daniel are as close to A&R as we get," smiles Burgess. "He's someone who's happy with how their record has come out, suggesting us to somebody he likes."

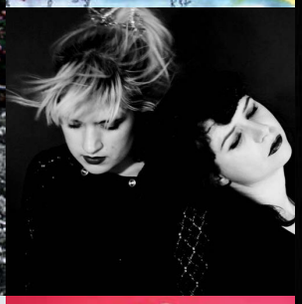
Burgess enjoys O Genesis' reputation as a label that takes a chance on artists, both for how early they are in their career and for the sometimes avant-garde music they make. "Some of the people we release, like The Silver Field and Richard Youngs, are abstract and in need of my help, to be able to put them in front of people," he says. "There's a purity there." But Burgess insists there's nothing wilfully obscure about O Genesis' output. "With the exception of John Kennedy on Radio X, hardly anything we do gets on the radio. But I think everything we do can get on the radio. Everything on O Genesis is a hit in my world. I believe in it."

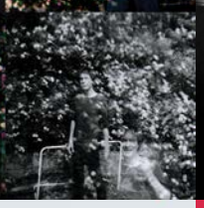
A handful of O Genesis singles have proved to be the sole releases in its artists' careers. Burgess cites Blood Music's 2012 single *Orphee* as a prime example, enthusing: "I thought Blood Music were the most amazing thing in the world. I'd listen to *Orphee* on my headphones, walking around North London, and it meant so much to me at the time. They disbanded after that one single, disappearing like a puff of smoke. O Genesis is a platform where I can help bands to know whether music is a serious thing for them or not."

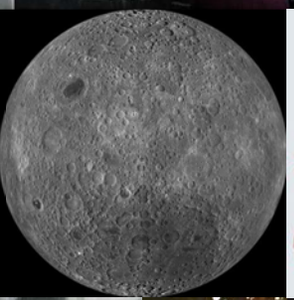
The name O Genesis has obvious links both to Creation Records and helping start artistic careers. Its actual, er, genesis was more prosaic. When Burgess was pondering names for his label, he learned that Genesis P-Orridge had left Throbbing Gristle, causing the Charlatan to exclaim: "Oh, Genesis!"

Even the singular Genesis P-Orridge would surely approve of the communal vision of the label named in his honour. All its acts own their music, free to re-release it on other record labels later if they want. As Burgess summarises: "Everyone owns everything, apart from me. That seems pretty ▶

KINDNESS







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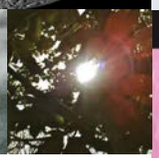
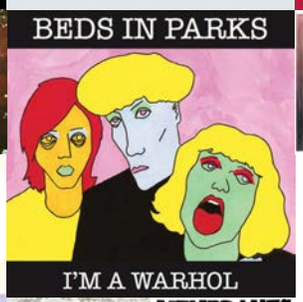
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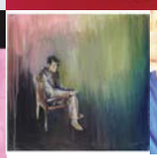

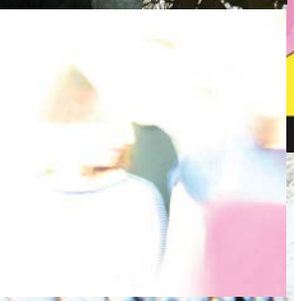
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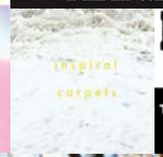
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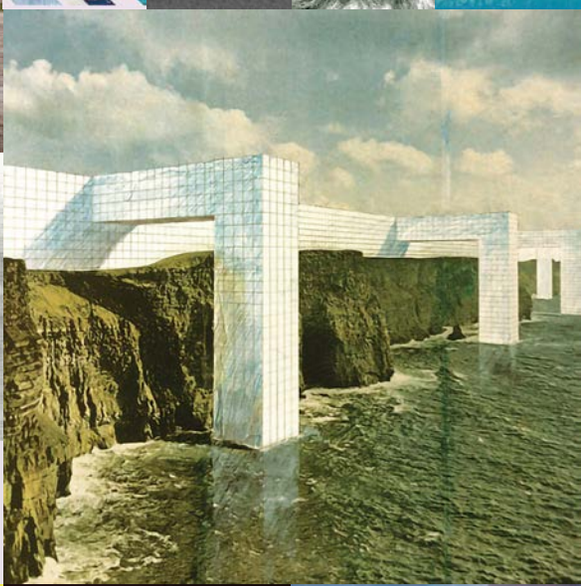
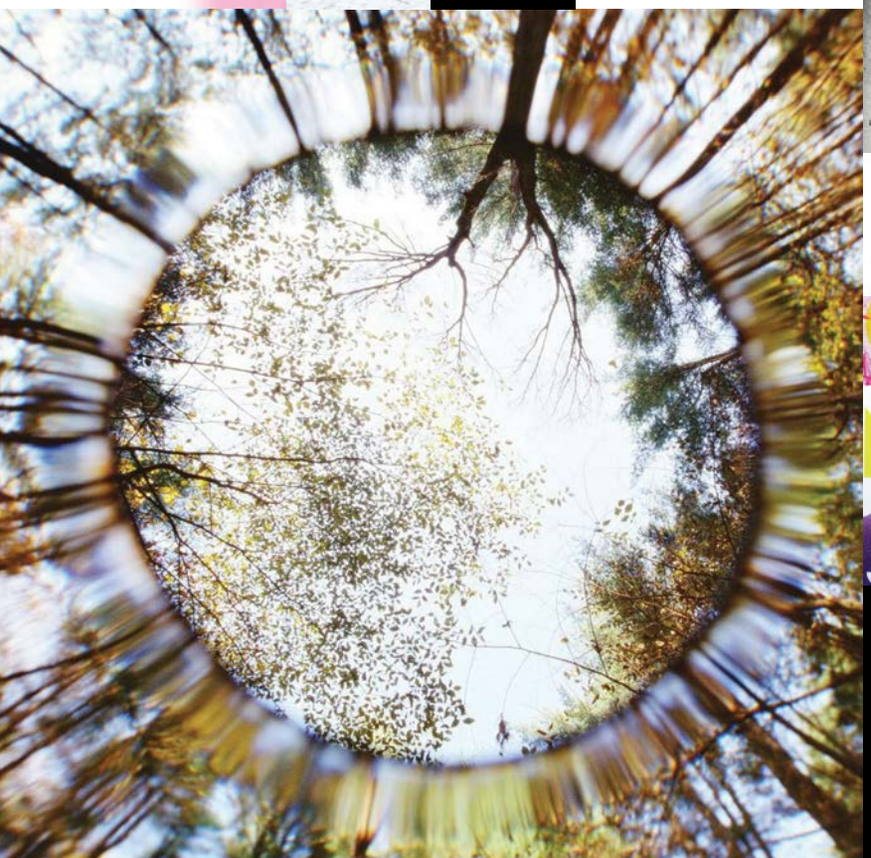

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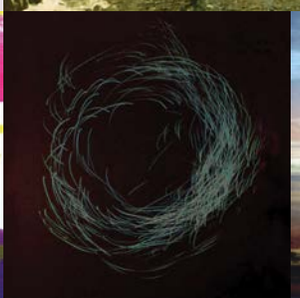

MINNY
POPS
WAITING FOR
THIS TO HAPPEN
GLISTERING

EDUCATION FOR DEATH

## CABBAGE SOUP

Of the artists to release on O Genesis, the most commercially successful apart from Tim Burgess himself are incendiary punks Cabbage, who released debut single *Dinner Lady* with the label in 2016 before signing to BMG. It was a split single with Beds In Parks, who included Finnigan Kidd, now of Average Sex. Kidd was also the drummer in Hatcham Social and Burgess' solo band.

"Putting Cabbage out was a bit different for O Genesis," says Burgess. "I already knew they'd go on to do really well; they didn't need us. I'm a big fan, but I did it partly to get Beds In Parks some attention, and partly because Cabbage wanted to be on O Genesis."

That's confirmed by Cabbage singer Lee Broadbent, who says: "The history of The Charlatans and our general love for what Tim's done in his career made it a label we really wanted to be involved with. Having friends already associated with O Genesis and it being a Manchester label striving to be different, they felt like a perfect platform for us."

Broadbent approves of Burgess' maverick signings. "It was through O Genesis that we found the sweet sounds of R. Stevie Moore. O Genesis chooses artists that push to be a full artistic product, rather than a singular musical band. That's reflected in the quality of Tim's label."

Richard Youngs

The Silver Field

fair to me. I just fall in love with something and try to do the best I can by it." It's an approach that has occasionally got Burgess in financial trouble. "There have been a few records you could say were impulsive on my part and haven't sold anything," he acknowledges. Take the self-titled EP by Italian duo Education For Death, released in 2013: "I was a little in debt at that point, and my label distributor said: 'Maybe hold off on releasing singles by people no one has ever heard of'. But then this crazy Italian kid got in touch with me through Facebook… *Education For Death* didn't sell very many copies, and they disbanded soon after. But there's a song on their EP called *Emma* that I'd play to anyone and be proud to say: 'I put this out into the world'."

### VIVA LA SOCIALE

Where Burgess is fortunate, of course, is that he has his own name he can trade on. O Genesis breaks even, partly thanks to Burgess releasing his solo albums on the label. He's also an engaging presence on social media, noting: "I'm good at Twitter, and that helps sell." It was through Twitter that Burgess met best-selling novelist Ian Rankin, who then penned short story *A Little Bit Of Powder* for O Genesis, after

**"I LOVE [LABEL ADMIN], SAME AS I LIKE WRITING A SETLIST OUT. I'VE HONED MY SECRETARIAL SKILLS NO END THANKS TO O GENESIS"**

Cabbage

R. Stevie Moore

Rankin said he wanted to write a tale about Christmas. It's a true story about a festive meeting between Teenage Fanclub singer Norman Blake and Big Star founder Alex Chilton. "We'd done spoken-word releases before, by the poet Jack Underwood," Burgess explains. "So why not do a spoken-word Ian Rankin story?" It's voiced by Burgess' *Line Of Duty* actor friend Craig Parkinson, host of award-winning acting podcast *The Two Shot*. "Craig brought layers of intrigue. Now it was an actor, reading a story by an author, about two musicians, coming out on the singer from The Charlatans' record label. Books get a second and third life in Oxfam, so we released *A Little Bit Of Powder* only in Oxfam."

Daniel O'Sullivan

Average Sex

Tim Burgess

Despite The Charlatans' long career, there was plenty for Burgess to learn about the realities of the music industry once he was running his own record company. "Business in general is something I've always tried to avoid," he says. "You have to lay money out at first, and it doesn't show up again for a long time, and in between you have other expenses happening." He pauses, aware this is very much 'Business 101', and laughs: "People in the real world understand all this on a daily basis, with taxes and so on. But making all of this work for me has taught me a lot."

The actual day-to-day label admin comes much easier. "I like lists," says Burgess. "So I've never had a problem with tasks like filling in metadata for streaming services; writing out album credits, like who wrote what and how many minutes and seconds each song lasts. I love all that, same as I like writing a setlist out. I've honed my secretarial skills no end thanks to O Genesis." It's a passion the other members of The Charlatans are generally happy to leave to their singer. "We have so many other things to talk about that they've never really said too much about it," Burgess states diplomatically, before offering the thoughts of guitarist Mark Collins and bassist Martin Blunt: "Mark really, really loves R. Stevie Moore, and Martin thinks there's no point unless I'm going to have a hit."

Lo-fi pioneer R. Stevie Moore is perhaps the ultimate example of an O Genesis artist, having released roughly 300 homemade albums since 1976, before working with Burgess. "R. Stevie being ignored for so long was a crime to me," Burgess emphasises.

## IF I COULD TURN BACK TIM

As well as The Silver Field's debut album in November, O Genesis will release more EPs by Average Sex, the critically acclaimed spin-off from folkies Hatcham Social. Average Sex, Burgess notes approvingly, "are now very self-sufficient". Meanwhile, alongside The Charlatans' joint-headline arena tour with James in December, Burgess is writing his third book, this time focused on his lyrics. Tentatively due out next May, it's told in reverse chronological order and includes lyrics which didn't form complete songs. "I interview myself in it," Burgess explains. "That gets stuff out of me that I wouldn't normally say. Some lyrics will throw me right back into feeling what I was at the time, and I imagine there'll be some embarrassing lyrics, too, where I think 'What is this?'"

The freedom to release his solo albums on O Genesis without any label interference is a blessing. *Oh No I Love You*, the album Burgess made with Lambchop singer Kurt Wagner, is O Genesis' best-seller. Even then, Burgess jokes: "I don't have to say anything to anyone apart from myself. But I'm always having arguments with the boss." It's a sterner attitude than Burgess takes with his other artists. If only other labels followed suit. ●



## INTO THE VOID

Tim Burgess' partner is Nik Void, half of synth-rock duo Factory Floor as well as a solo artist. One of O Genesis' key early releases was single *Gold E*. It's housed in a polyurethane sleeve, which is playable – but whose resin destroys the turntable's needle as it does so.

"I haven't played the sleeve that often," confesses Burgess. "Fortunately, *Gold E* came out as an MP3 as well, which is less damaging to the needle. The concept of that single was an amazing change in how O Genesis is viewed, the scope of what we're trying to achieve."

Making the sleeve was the biggest risk Burgess has taken for the label. He recalls: "Me and Nik had to make it in a large warehouse, while wearing masks, because the fumes from the polyurethane were so bad. We made 250 sleeves, which was pretty intense. The trouble is, the record was so popular, we had to make another 250. That nearly killed us."

Void oversees O Genesis' artwork, with Burgess admitting: "Nik makes everything look amazing. She doesn't tell me what she's doing before, and she gets carried away, but that's my fault.

"I'd have to say – not just because she's my partner – that releasing a Nik Void record would be my dream for O Genesis. But there's so many people who want to put her music out that it's not going to happen. DFA Records will get there first."

Nik Void

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James Marsh in his Iveley Road, London workspace in 1979

James at home in Kent, 2018

## COVER STAR

# JAMES MARSH

**Teri Saccone** visits artist James Marsh, whose transformations of the natural world graced Talk Talk's records throughout their career

A native Yorkshireman, James Marsh began his artistic career in the mid 1960s and continues to undertake varied projects to this day. He has worked extensively across the music, publishing, editorial and advertising industries, and masterfully created Talk Talk's mesmerising album covers; his quasi-surrealistic depictions of the natural world for the eclectic, indefinable band are a true fusion of sound and visuals.

We speak in Marsh's spacious studio on the Kent coast. He has a reserved manner, yet is clearly energised by his work: art populates his environs, with assorted sculptures, graphics and paintings adorning the spaces. "My work is all around the house. By living alongside my work, it helps me become more objective about it," Marsh says. "The house is like a gallery in some respects, not only for my art, but also for the various *objets d'art* and eclectic items I've accumulated over the years. I enjoy surrounding myself with things that interest or stimulate me."

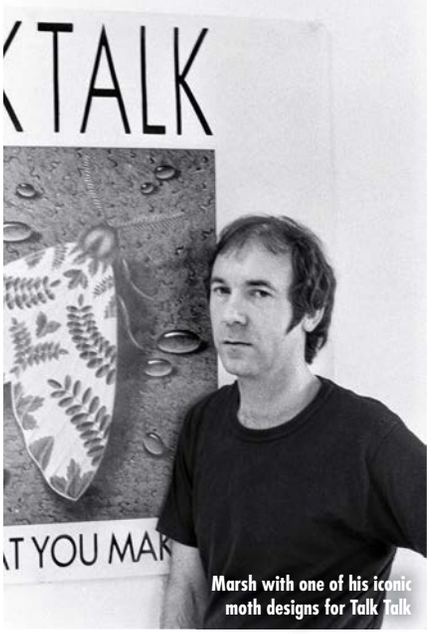
Marsh's objective with his art is an emotive one: "I hope to get people engaged with it." Yet he's a self-described visual "problem solver". His career was not heavily strategised. Instead, his path was due partially to a perceptive secondary school advisor. "I didn't think I was particularly talented at school, as far as art was concerned, but always gravitated towards anything practical, such as woodwork and metalwork. In my final year, a career officer enquired about what we wanted to do after leaving school. I honestly had no idea whatsoever. He intuitively judged my glazed expression, and after a while, probed about my interests to gain some further insight. So, quite naturally, I mentioned art classes. He must have approached the art teacher, who I'm eternally grateful to, for instigating my enrolment at Batley School Of Art & Design. It later transpired I was the first person from my school to make such a transition. After the first basic year, I opted for the three-year design course over fine art, mainly because it offered more career opportunities."

Marsh came of age during pivotal times. "I was born in '46 and grew up in the 50s, so was part of that post-war generation which became more aspirational, wanting to make a fresh start after the war. That's why the 60s was such a big deal for my generation: it symbolised moving away from austerity. After leaving art college, I gravitated to London to find suitable employment. Moving there in the Swinging Sixties was a seminal period for me, in all respects. It's fascinating to recall those creative times. It was akin to living in the eye of a hurricane, in some respects."

### PAINT AND INK

Interestingly, Marsh's art career began in the music industry, starting with his first job at Pye Records before moving on to Decca Records. After leaving Decca, he joined artist Alan Aldridge in forming a new design group called INK Studios. "I worked there on a wide range of projects, including publishing, advertising and editorial work. I collaborated on *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* book and Andy Warhol's *Chelsea Girls* poster, which was the start of my three-dimensional model-making phase. From there, I set up my own studio, Head Office, working internationally on everything from major ad campaigns

Marsh in his Hythe studio, with *Proverbial Sheep*, a mural in Romney Marsh




Marsh with one of his iconic moth designs for Talk Talk

John Knights

to magazine and book covers. It's there that model-making took over for quite a while."

Despite having worked with a varied clientele, musicians seem to hold a special affinity for Marsh. "That's because musicians are creative people, there's a similar mindset. Generally, I tend to work with people who like what I do. Consequently, they're happy to give me a free hand creatively. My creative services are affordable for most musicians, which normally consist of visuals through to print-ready files, usually in the form of a complete album package, often including a logo or some form of branding in the bargain. I'm interested in typography, too. Creating the complete packaging is preferable to me than simply providing the cover art. It's the overall concept and quality control that I'm aiming for."

Marsh was recruited into the Talk Talk milieu via their manager in the 80s. "I already knew Keith Aspden socially, via mutual friends. He confided in me, after a pleasant lunch, about a new band he was managing, but was unsure about how best to market them visually, mainly because Mark Hollis [singer and founder] didn't want to be represented like everyone else. He simply asked me if I would give the matter some thought. Given very little else to go on, I went away and did exactly that… which is how I came up with the lips concept, quite literally based on the band's name. I saw it almost as a logo for the band initially, but carried the facial aspect on through to the singles, shortly after the ideas I provided were requested for reproduction." Marsh worked with Talk Talk for the duration of their existence.

## JUDGE A COVER BY ITS BOOK

As a book illustrator, it was requisite that Marsh read the manuscripts prior to creating the cover images to encapsulate the narrative in a visual format. While creating sleeves for Talk Talk, though, he was not privy to hearing much of their music before providing the concepts. "This was down to timing. Promotional material was required way before albums were completed, which made it impossible to hear the music beforehand."

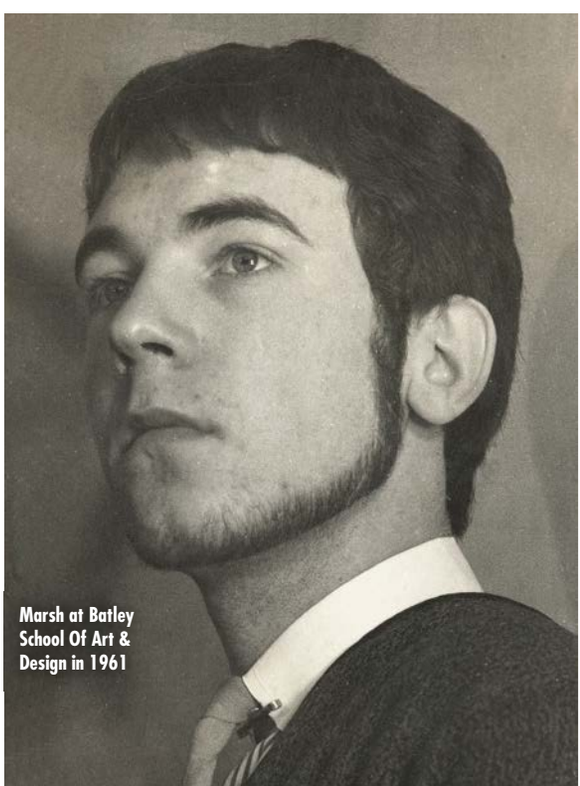
Of his fruitful association with Talk Talk, Marsh not only produced the images, he's also a longtime fan of their hauntingly beautiful, immersive music. "I still enjoy listening to them. With Talk Talk, my artwork has become synonymous with their music – the two are now fused together in time."

He worked with the band throughout the 80s until they finally split in the early 90s.

> "WITH TALK TALK, MY ARTWORK HAS BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH THEIR MUSIC – THE TWO ARE NOW FUSED TOGETHER IN TIME"

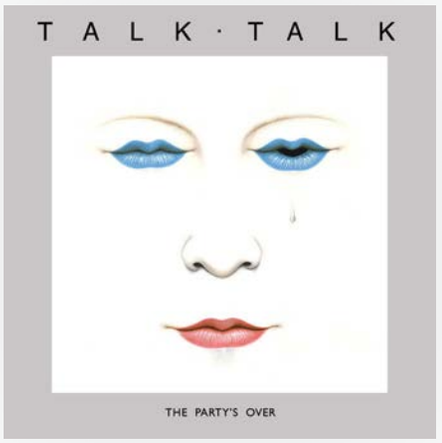
It was around this time that computer-generated art started to take a foothold. After initial reluctance, Marsh eventually embraced the new technology. "In the early 90s, when this kind of change began, other traditional illustrators like myself avoided the technology. I resisted initially, as it was quite a different working method altogether, plus there's no actual physical artwork to exhibit. However, I realised if I wanted to become autonomous I'd need to get involved somehow; everything was being digitised then. I also acknowledged that technology would allow me to live outside of London. Besides, I'm never happy when things feel static creatively, or I'm not progressing as an artist, so I also wanted to move on for that reason."

Changes within the industry prompted his move from London to the Kent coast. "Times changed, and so did illustration. In the mid 90s, most art directors of my generation were retiring, leading to younger ones coming into the business who were naturally hiring within their own age group. This also encouraged the rise of 'lad culture,' and consequently, anything that had gone before was automatically rejected. There's always a backlash against any establishment… I then realised I was considered 'old school'. Coincidentally, I also wanted to explore other creative avenues, including fine art, so it was a convergence of several things that affected my move. I owned a large house in Clapham, and decided to sell up and follow my instincts. I think the timing was perfect for me to do that."



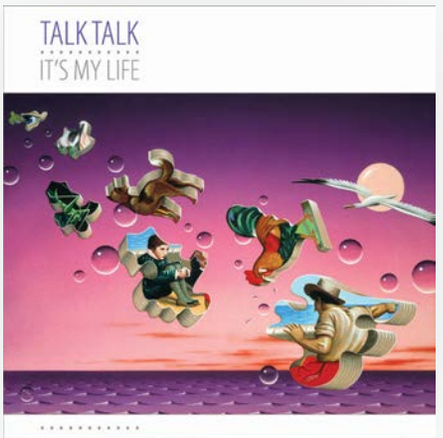
Marsh at Batley School Of Art & Design in 1961

# JAMES MARSH



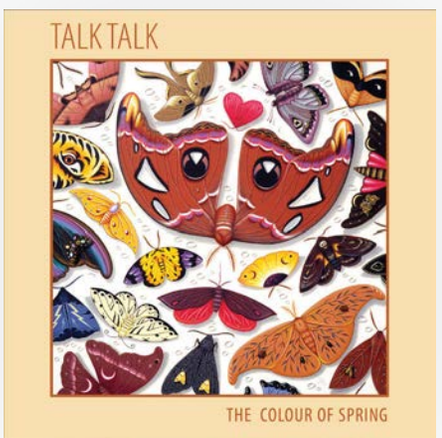

**TALK TALK**
THE PARTY'S OVER
(1982)

"The face image was originally designed to act almost as a logo for the band. Mark (Hollis, lead singer, founder) didn't want to take the obvious approach of using pin-up-style photos on the album covers, preferring instead to focus on the music. Given this simple directive and little else, my inspiration came straight from the band's name – literally using lips by way of reinforcing it… I carried the same theme through by using other facial elements on the single releases, taken from the same album."




**TALK TALK**
IT'S MY LIFE
(1984)

"This was an existing image, proposed by myself for the cover of *It's My Life*, mainly due to the short notice available for producing anything original within the allotted timeframe. It was created originally for the wraparound cover of a hardback book titled *The Facts Of Life* by Robert Nye in 1983. The basic underlying theme is much the same, which is why it seemed so apt in this instance. The eponymous single taken from the album was simply a sliced section crop from the same artwork."




**TALK TALK**
THE COLOUR OF SPRING
(1986)

"I was provided with a tracklisting along with the lyrics for the title song, which gave me a lot more to consider… I was forewarned at least two singles would be required, along with the cover design. That fact alone prompted the general idea of producing single moths for the single covers, and a collection of moths coming together for the album. Everyone loved the concept, so it was simply a matter of realising the vision. Incidentally, the original title was 'April 5th'… I was surprised to be presented with my own gold disc by EMI for sales of 100,000 copies."

**TALK TALK**
SPIRIT OF EDEN
(1988)

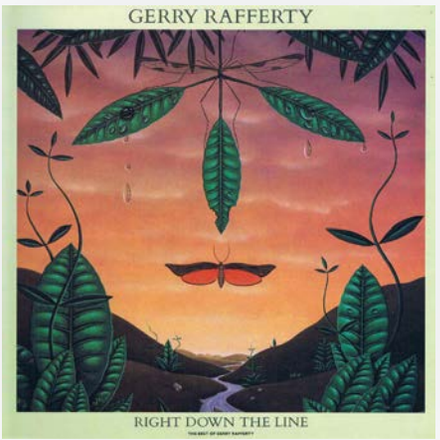
"My painting for this album was created as a personal piece in 1975, at a period when I was producing new work, while phasing out my 3D model-making style. I had lent Talk Talk's manager Keith Aspden a collection of images initially, mainly to show the band examples of my work. It was Mark who thought the image was perfect for this particular album, so naturally, that's exactly what happened in this case. The only single from that album, *I Believe In You*, used the identical image, except it was placed on a black background to distinguish it from the album."

## CLASSIC COVERS

# JAMES MARSH

**TALK TALK**
LAUGHING STOCK
(1991)

"For their final studio album, I orchestrated a collection of rare and endangered birds into a single bird shape, which was something of an ecological statement, really. Everyone loved the finished piece, but Mark had an instinct to follow the *Spirit…* album with another tree image. Which is why I produced this alternative global-tree version. It contains exactly the same birds, but they form the shape of the continents this time round. The first painting was subsequently used on the 3CD boxset, entitled *After The Flood*."

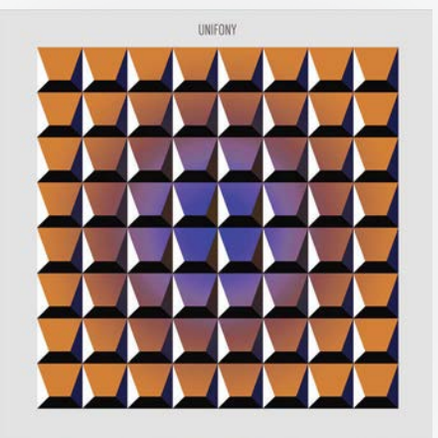



**GERRY RAFFERTY**
RIGHT DOWN THE LINE
(1989)

"Commissioned by EMI records, with a request by Gerry, wanting a portrait of himself for this album. I managed to persuade him into trying something more symbolic in nature, which is why it's not a straightforward portrait, in the traditional sense. He was very happy with my suggestion and also the end product."

**JAMIROQUAI**
EMERGENCY ON PLANET EARTH
(1993)

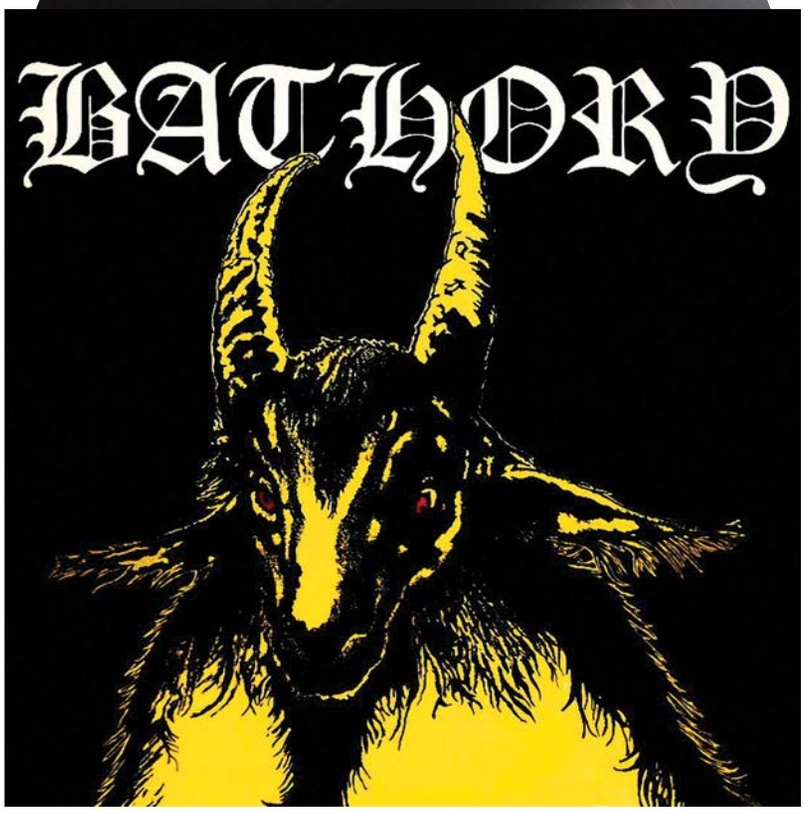
"Originally conceived as a wraparound album cover, featuring the cat in the hat, Jay Kay, on the front cover, then being relegated to the inside gatefold position for some unexplained reason. Apparently, Jay loved the image so much, he asked if I would consider painting it as a mural for his recording studio – it never actually went further than that, probably due to his heavily scheduled touring commitments at the time."




**MINCO EGGERSMAN, THEODOOR BORGER & MATHIAS EICK**
UNIFONY
(2018)

"A recent album cover design for the Dutch musician and composer Minco Eggersman. Produced in both 12" vinyl and Digipak formats, including a short video for the single and album promo. My abstract work lends itself to his kind of atmospheric music." ●

# Choice Cuts #19




# BATHORY

## *BATHORY*

**BLACK VINYL**

The improvised packaging decisions of a metal bandleader on a limited budget created an LP that's highly prized in this, and indeed any, realm

**WAX FACTS**
**Bathory**
***Bathory***
*Year* **1984**
*Format* **LP**
*Label* **Black Mark Production**

**£1,500**

While the style was later taken to the extreme by the Norwegian scene, Bathory were pioneers of black metal. Bathory initially had more in common with thrash and trad metal, but their aesthetic was one of the biggest influences on the black-metal genre's second wave.

Bathory themselves were influenced by Motörhead, GBH, Black Sabbath and Venom. Their debut album is raw, fierce and features a lo-fi production quality that was typical of the time. It would have sounded wrong any other way, though. Recorded and mixed in under three days, the rushed approach adds to both the urgency and depravity of the record.

Right before the 1984 release, the album was initially set to be called 'Pentagrammaton' and a pentagram was going to adorn the front cover. This idea was scrapped, and the pentagram moved to the rear of the sleeve. In true DIY fashion, Bathory mastermind Quorthon used rub-on lettering to create the text on the back, but ran out of Cs, resulting in a dubious misspelling of 'Necromansy'. Yet that's not the rarest part.

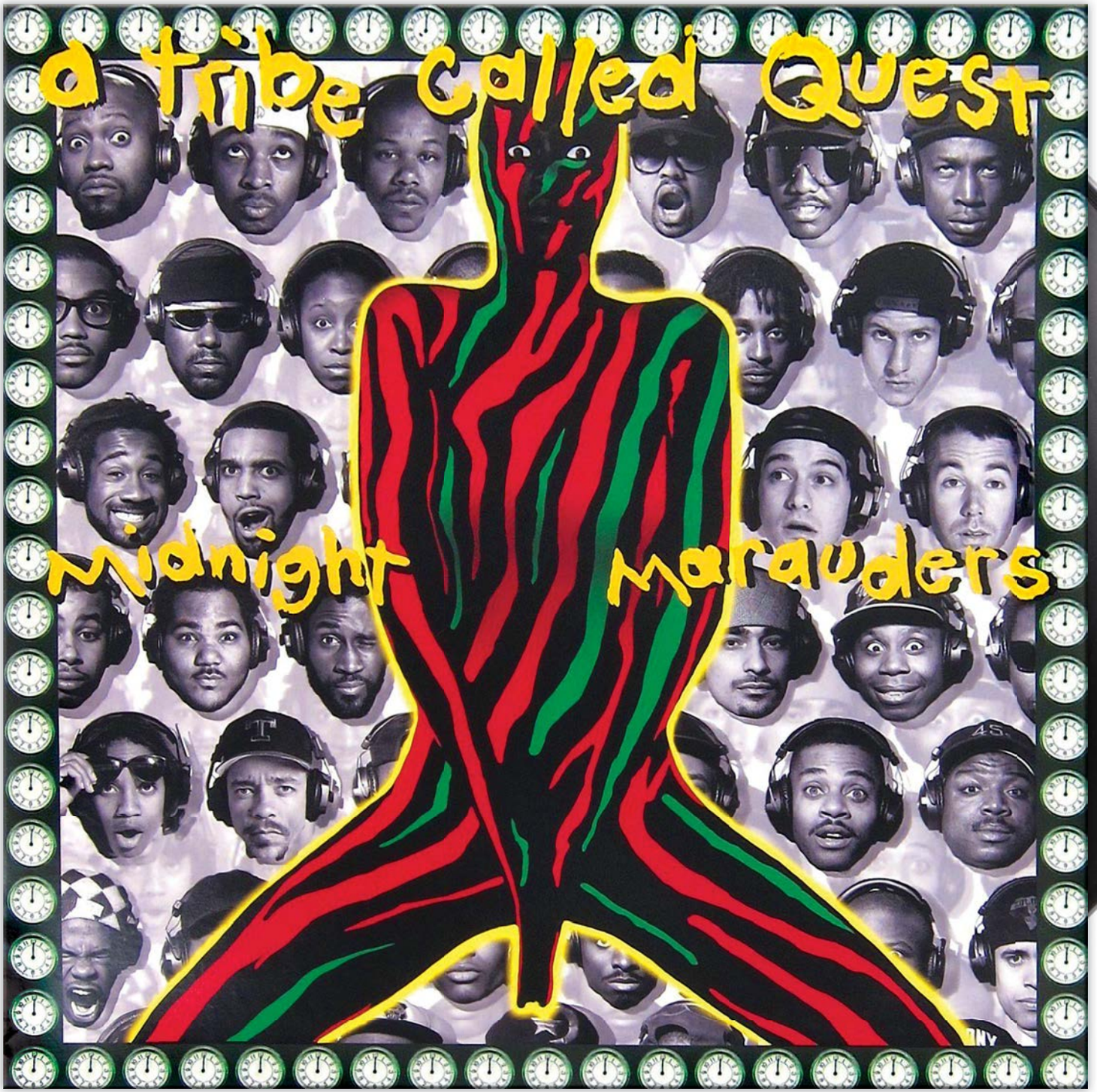
The goat on the front cover, taken from a Joseph Smith drawing, was supposed to be printed in gold. The cost was too high, so Quorthon asked for it to be as close to gold as possible. The result was bright yellow, and even Quorthon himself said the cover looks "awful". After the initial 1,000 copies were sold, though, it was switched to the now-iconic black-and-white design. The original yellow-goat pressing, aka 'Gula Geten', is worth in the region of £1,500, and the chance of ever seeing one is slim to none. ***Glen Bushell***

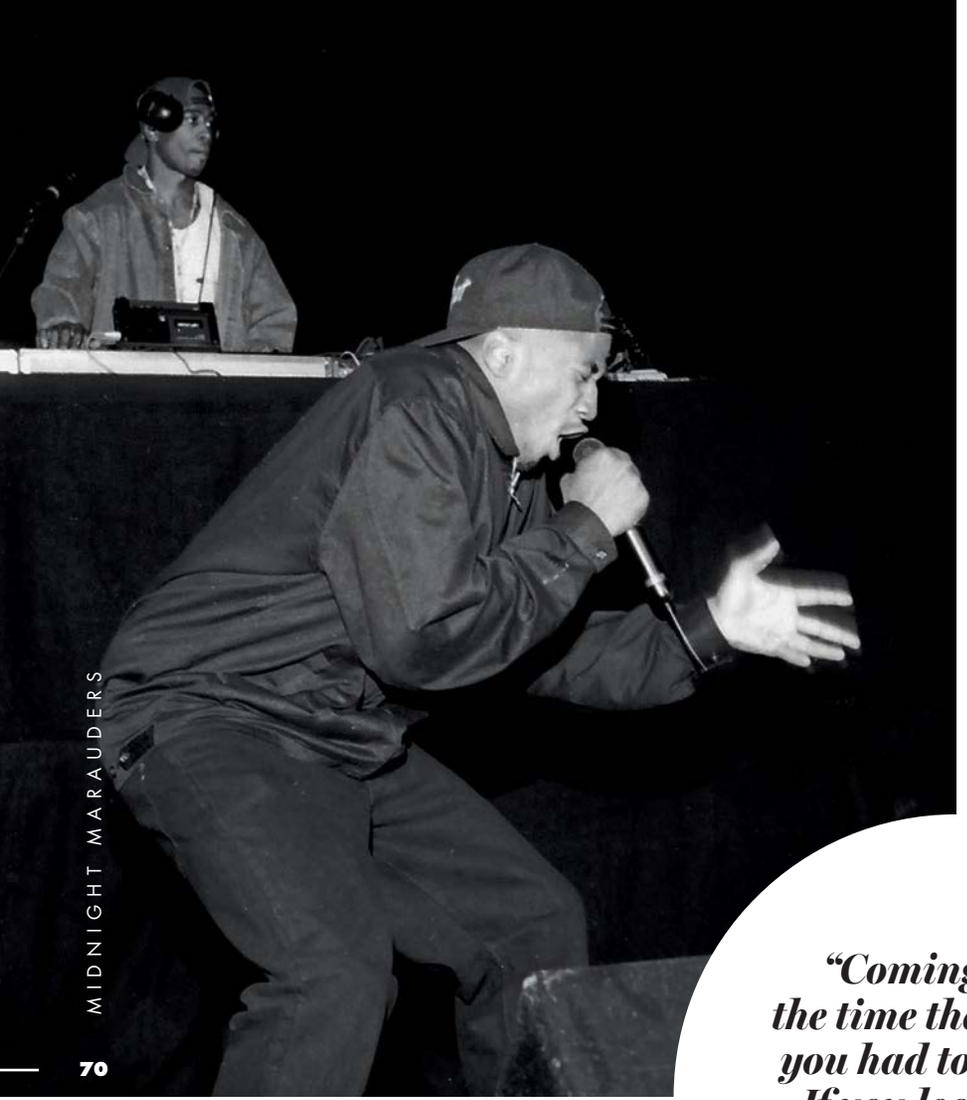
# Classic Album

# A TRIBE CALLED QUEST

# *MIDNIGHT MARAUDERS*

A Tribe Called Quest cemented their position as hip-hop royalty with 1991's *The Low End Theory*. But in 1993, a year that would help define the 'golden era' of rap, their third record *Midnight Marauders* went even further, explains **Sam Willis**...


a tribe called Quest
midnight marauders



Alamy

**Onstage at KMEL Summer Jam 1993 in Mountain View, California**





The year 1993 saw hip-hop go through one of its most lasting periods of metamorphosis. "The second Tuesday of November 1993," says The Roots' Questlove in the documentary *Beats Rhymes & Life: The Travels Of A Tribe Called Quest*, "I consider that to be the last great day in classic hip-hop." It was on that day that two iconic albums were released: *Enter The Wu-Tang (36 Chambers)* by the Wu-Tang Clan and *Midnight Marauders* by A Tribe Called Quest.

That pair of dichotomous records can be seen as a microcosm of the diversity in hip-hop at the time. *…36 Chambers* was a dark, unruly and intimidating riposte to the West Coast's commercially gargantuan G-funk sound. It brought critical attention and an engaging brand back East, and set the groundwork for the likes of Biggie, Nas and Mobb Deep.

*Midnight Marauders*, on the other hand, was smooth and enlightened. It represented the last great swansong of the Native Tongues; a great peak in the work of a collective that pushed politically engaged, positive and Afrocentric rap. With the sharp focus of hindsight, for many, these records represented the death knell of the hallowed 'golden age'.

Elsewhere in '93, landmark records also came from the likes of KRS-One, Souls of Mischief, 2Pac, De La Soul, Run-D.M.C. and Mobb Deep, making it one of the most fertile years in the lineage of the genre. The release of *…36 Chambers* on 9 November marked the beginning of an illustrious career for Wu-Tang and its clan members. *Midnight Marauders*, in many ways, was the beginning of the end for Tribe. Tensions in the band had started to ferment. However, before those tensions took a stranglehold, Q-Tip, Phife Dawg and Ali Shaheed Muhammad released the most flawless record in their catalogue and one of the most iconic hip-hop records of all time.

***"Coming up in the time that we did, you had to be hard. If you looked like you were soft, you would be fodder for the wolves"***

Q-TIP

*Midnight Marauders* arrived three years after the release of Tribe's debut record *People's Instinctive Travels And The Paths of Rhythm* and five years after the Native Tongues' Ground Zero moment: Jungle Brothers' *Straight Out The Jungle*. That five-year period saw East Coast hip-hop in an era of psychedelic experimentation, spearheaded by Native Tongues – a loose collection of artists fronted by the triumvirate of A Tribe Called Quest, Jungle Brothers and De La Soul. The movement was a rebuttal of what was defined 'cool' at the time. There was carte blanche to be goofy, celebrate individual eccentricities and exist without affectation. "It's been pretty much a cool existence to be in Tribe… Along with De La Soul, we were like: 'It's cool to be you,'" Q-Tip told Hattie Collins in *The Guardian* in 2008.

**Wu-Tang Clan's contrasting *…36 Chambers* was released on the same day as *Midnight Marauders***

**1990's *People's Instinctive Travels And The Paths Of Rhythm* was hugely influential**

## RHYME IN RIDDLES

Through this attitude, A Tribe Called Quest and Native Tongues brought diversity to hip-hop culture and challenged personas of masculinity in a period dense with gangster rap on both coasts. "In the African-American community specifically, coming up in the time that we did, you had to be hard," continues Q-Tip. "If you looked like you were soft, you would be fodder for the wolves. I came up in my neighbourhood like: 'I'm just gonna be me,' and all the thugs just said: 'It's okay, he's special.'" *Midnight Marauders* celebrated that ethos in a way that hasn't been replicated by anyone as well since.

*The Low End Theory*, Tribe's 1991 album, arguably represents the Native Tongues in a more purist sense. There is an ongoing argument within the Tribe fanbase as to which of the two albums is their magnum opus.

# The songs

**Personnel**
**DJ** Ali Shaheed Muhammad
**Vocals** Q-Tip, Phife Dawg
**Guest artists** Trugoy The Dove, Large Professor, Busta Rhymes, Raphael Wiggins
**Producer** Skeff Anselm, Large Professor, ATCQ

## 1 *TOUR GUIDE*

The inclusion of the 'tour guide' skit, which recurs throughout the record during track outros, is the definitive conceit that separates *Midnight Marauders* from *The Low End Theory* in stylistic cohesion. Reportedly performed by Jive Records' secretary Laurel Dann, who had her voice digitised throughout the skits, the tour guide provides "certain facts that you may find beneficial" and hopes that we, the listeners, find the "presentation precise, bass-heavy and just right". The background music is sampled from *Aquarius*, a 1969 song by jazz vibraphone legend Cal Tjader.

## 2 *STEVE BIKO (STIR IT UP)*

Steve Biko was an anti-Apartheid activist in South Africa during the 60s and 70s. He founded the Black Consciousness Movement, which was responsible for the 1976 Soweto Uprising, and died in prison after violent interrogation. The parenthesised *Stir it Up* is a reference to Bob Marley & The Wailers' '67 track. These reference points, as well the braggadocio verses about Q-Tip and Phife's ability that make up large swathes of the lyrical content, offer a mission statement for the record. They're at the pinnacle of their careers artistically, and here to invoke a pro-black, positive and rebellious spirit, to uplift their African-American listeners.

## 3 *AWARD TOUR*

*Award Tour* was the first single release to emerge from *Midnight Marauders* and is Tribe's best-ever-charting hit, peaking at No.47 on the US Billboard chart. Coming off the back of *The Low End Theory*'s massive success, it's a celebration of their conquering of the mainstream and new-found international reputation (the hook listing off cities in the US and the world that their 'Award Tour' is stopping off at). The track features Trugoy The Dove of fellow Native Tongues outfit De La Soul on the chorus and a sample of *We Gettin' Down* from Weldon Irvine's 1975 album *Spirit Man*.

## 4 *8 MILLION STORIES*

*8 Million Stories* is a rare moment on the record, and Tribe's discography more generally, where Phife Dawg enjoys the entirety of the spotlight. During *The Low End Theory* – and in particular the opening phrase of *Buggin' Out* – Phife made his mark as the lyrical and stylistic yin to Q-Tip's yang; a direct and enthusiastic riposte to Tip's smooth philosophy. Here, however, Phife gets to express himself in a linear narrative not often explored by Tribe. Phife recounts a day when he is hounded by gold diggers, has his car stolen, burns his clothes with an iron, and gets caught with weed by cops.

## 5 *SUCKA NIGGA*

"We've taken a word that the white man put on us in a derogatory sense and put love in it. But yet – and still – he ▶

**A Tribe Called Quest recording *The Low End Theory* in New York in 1991**

Getty

Getty

Phife Dawg, circa 1990: the rapper died in 2016, aged 45, from complications related to diabetes

For many, including this writer, it's like choosing your favourite child. They both envelop some of Tribe's greatest singles, they both tread similar thematic paths, utilise jazz and soul samples to stunning effect and are both astonishing pieces of work. The only way to dissect them is to hold each one up to the light and look at their successes as two parts of the same image.

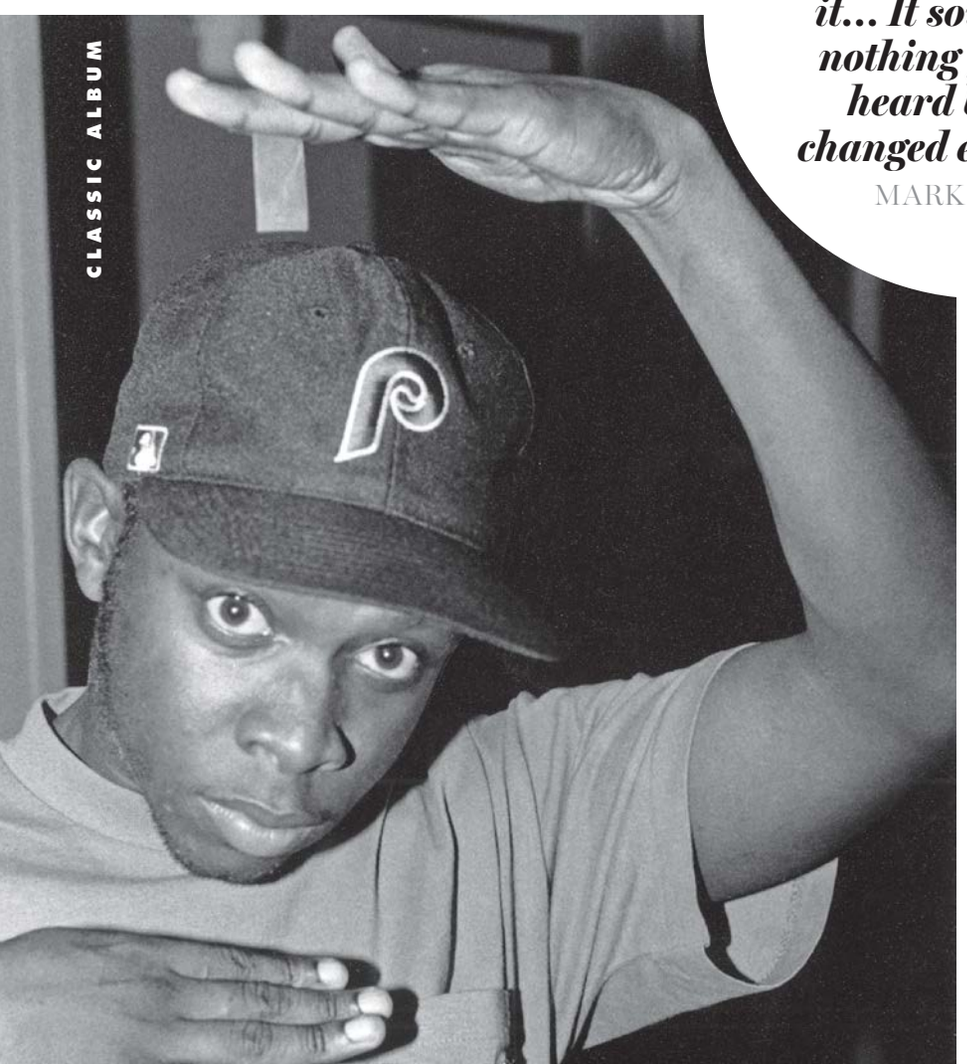
Coming off the back of *People's Instinctive Travels…*, *The Low End Theory* exploded, both critically and commercially. It was a real statement of intent and encompassed everything it meant to be a part of Native Tongues. Along with De La Soul's *3 Feet High And Rising*, it was seen as a mission statement for what the group of artists represented. It was also the moment when Phife Dawg became an active member of the group. His opening gambit in *Buggin' Out* – "Yo, microphone check one, two, what is this?/ The five-foot assassin with the roughneck business" – was an explosive arrival to the pantheon of great rappers.

The following tracks are a perfect snapshot of Tribe's vision for hip-hop. It's packed full of 70s jazz, soul and funk samples (a result of Q-Tip's encyclopaedic knowledge and voracious appetite for music), waxes lyrical about empowerment, knowledge and celebrating your roots, and is brimming with confidence.

***"Midnight Marauders just had this sheen to it… It sounded like nothing you'd ever heard before. It changed everything"***

MARK RONSON





Getty

The challenge with *Midnight Marauders* was to follow up something so perfect with something even better. It did. It took all the elements that had made *The Low End Theory* great and amplified them while, crucially, nurturing a sense of stylistic and thematic cohesion. This was done largely via the 'tour guide', an electronically modified voice that guides the listener through the record. This masterstroke brings the album together from a collection of songs to a succinct project in a way *The Low End Theory* didn't.

"Also, [I] have to take responsibility for that weird computerised voice throughout *Midnight Marauders*," Q-Tip told *Vibe* magazine in 2011. "We just wanted to do something different. Everybody was used to hearing that kind of voice, whether they were calling a phone company, or they were on hold. There was always some type of monotone female voice that had a computerised vibe that was giving you information. So I thought, 'How cool would it be if you called to pay your bill and then you would hear this female voice started rattling shit off like: Keep bouncing?'"

Occasionally named the 'Hip Hop HAL', the tour guide for the record not only introduces the album, but she guides the listener through the concerns of the artists. At the end of *Midnight*, she asks: "Did you know that the rate of AIDS in the black and Hispanic community is rising at an alarming rate? Education is proper means for slowing

it down". Here, she helps to cement Tribe's quest for knowledge and the intention of enlightening their listeners to social injustices. Nowhere else in their discography is this done as consistently, through an entity which stands separate from their music. It also gives a voice to the ATCQ 'mascot' who appears on the covers of *The Low End Theory*, *Midnight Marauders* and *Beats, Rhymes And Life*.

### PRECISE, BASS-HEAVY AND JUST RIGHT

Not only was this album held together better than *The Low End Theory* through an ongoing conceit, but it includes some of the best production of Q-Tip's career. In conversation with *NME*, Mark Ronson said that the album "changed the sound of East Coast hip-hop… *Midnight Marauders* just had this sheen to it – it wasn't too cleaned up or sanitised, the snares still had that amazing 'crack' to them, but it sounded like nothing you'd ever heard before. It changed everything."

Q-Tip – through his work for Tribe, as a solo artist and as a producer for other artists – consistently weaved impressively obscure 70s jazz and soul cuts together. Along with Ali Shaheed Muhammad on *Midnight Marauders*, this reached its glossy height. The ability to augment and cut samples into almost unrecognisable punctuations and core backbones of tracks, as well as the mind-boggling array of samples that Tip utilised for the record, had a huge influence on almost everything that has come afterwards. Just five years ago, hip-hop was awash with alternative 'backpack' rappers: Chance The Rapper, Childish Gambino et al. These artists weave psychedelia and

# The songs *continued*

can't use it. I know it stems from a bad background, but I'm just representing the street. All the kids in the street know where that shit comes from," Q-Tip told *Vibe* about *Sucka Nigga*. The track deals with the use of the most controversial word in the English language. It's a term that holds the weight of centuries' worth of blood and suffering in just two syllables and is still a source of debate amongst the African-American hip-hop community. Here, Tip argues that it has been successfully reclaimed into something positive, although he knows that a key to being able to reclaim it is to understand its murderous history.

## 6 *MIDNIGHT*

A recurring theme of *Midnight Marauders*, as the title suggests, is the nocturnal movements of New York's hip-hop community. As the tour guide explains in the outro to *Award Tour:* "Seven times out of 10, we listen to our music at night. Thus spawned the title of this programme. The word 'maraud' means 'to loot'. In this case, we maraud for ears." *Midnight* details the activities of midnight marauders in a more tangible sense. Q-Tip recounts the midnight movements of 'Jake', a "ghetto child" who cruises the block rolling dice, trying to get laid, getting high and looking out for cops.

## 7 *WE CAN GET DOWN*

Eric B. & Rakim's *My Melody* was a defining moment in the lineage of hip-hop. No matter where you turn, that song rears its head. Along with *The Big Beat* by Billy Squier, *My Melody* is a core sample in *We Can Get Down* and another of many moments on *Midnight Marauders* where Q-Tip uses his encyclopaedic knowledge of music to make some of the best beats in East Coast hip-hop history. *We Can Get Down* is another moment on the album where Phife and Tip wax lyrical about how they reign supreme over "candy rappers" and use their platform to spread positivity, rather than the perceived negativity of gangster rappers on the opposite end of the hip-hop spectrum.

## 8 *ELECTRIC RELAXATION*

One of A Tribe Called Quest's most revered songs, *Electric Relaxation* is *Midnight Marauders'* primary exhibit of Q-Tip and Phife Dawg's dynamism as a rap duo. Dipping in and out of verses seamlessly, to a backing loop of Ronnie Foster's *Mystic Brew*, they showcase the duality of their relationship. Tip is the "mesmerised" street poet, dumbstruck by lust and Phife Dawg far more direct, typified by the infamous line: "Bust off on your couch, now you got Seamen's Furniture" – for those unaware, Seamen's was a knock-off furniture shop in New York. Hopefully, the double entendre needs no explanation.

## 9 *CLAP YOUR HANDS*

Combining samples from Bob James' 1974 track *Nautilus* and The Meters' *Handclapping Song, Clap Your Hands* is a standout 'boom bap' production from the plethora on show. Phife Dawg and Q-Tip share the track via two extended verses nearly one-and-a-half

# The songs *continued*

minutes long apiece, with a sparse hook made up of The Meters' sample. It's one of the shortest and most minimalistic tracks on the record.

## 10 *OH MY GOD*

*Oh My God* is another of the tracks that stand out from a production point of view, regardless of lyrical content. The horn sample, taken from Kool And The Gang's *Who's Gonna Take The Weight*, and bass sample from Lee Morgan's *Absolutions* mastermind an insatiably head-nodding backdrop to another track about Tip and Phife's ascension to hip-hop royalty. Another classic line from the A Tribe Called Quest lexicon comes from Phife: "When's the last time you heard a funky diabetic?"

## 11 *KEEP IT ROLLIN'*

MC and producer Large Professor joins Q-Tip and Phife Dawg on *Keep It Rollin'*, which rolls out Roy Ayers' 1974 cover of Roberta Flack's *Feel Like Makin' Love*. The track is broken down into three extended verses – one apiece for Phife, Tip and Large Pro – with no chorus. Phife proclaims: "People love the Dawg like the kids love Barney" in reference to Barney The Dinosaur, who was hot property in the 90s. Large Pro shouts out to Queens and his 19-year-old protégé Nas, whose debut *Illmatic* would go on to be considered one of the best hip-hop records put on wax, while Large Pro was to ultimately stagnate and wither in the face of record-label delays.

## 12 *THE CHASE, PART II*

*The Chase, Part II* is where shadows start to reappear and the sun begins to rise on *Midnight Marauders*. Even the sample – Steve Arrington's *Beddie-Biey* – sounds like a softly pulsating alarm as Tribe's nocturnal odyssey begins to come to a close. It represents yet another moment on the album that solidifies the chemistry between Tip and Phife as they share another track seamlessly. As it closes, Q-Tip tells everyone from Queens to McDonald's to "rock, rock on".

## 13 *LYRICS TO GO*

As the title suggests, *Lyrics To Go* details how easily Tribe reign supreme lyrically. While Q-Tip isn't famed for dense rhyming patterns and playing with structure in the way that Eminem, André 3000 or Kendrick Lamar are – his patterns are relatively straightforward – what makes him stand out are his vast reference points. In just the first four lines of his second verse of this track he references manga and ancient Chinese philosophy: "Please proceed with caution 'cause the lyricist is fatal/ I can kick your little monkey ass like Kato/ Formulate your rhymes like a child forms Play-Doh/ Calm and serene like the study was Tao."

## 14 *GOD LIVES THROUGH*

The album's final track sees a reprise of the Busta Rhymes hook in *Oh My God* alongside a sample of Christine McVie's *And That's Saying A Lot*. Q-Tip signs off the record with shout-outs to the five boroughs, Jersey, Philly, Milwaukee, LA and Oaktown.

quirkiness into their sound. They shunned the typical hip-hop norms of the day and have a direct lineage back to A Tribe Called Quest.

*Midnight Marauders* is Tribe at their very best and it's no exaggeration to say that, without them and this album, hip-hop today would be markedly different. Appearing on SiriusXM's Sway In The Morning, Kanye West said that "*Midnight Marauders*, *Electric Relaxation*, *Low End Theory* – a lot of the melodies and the type of chords they would sample… was what I was going for when I did *The College Dropout*."

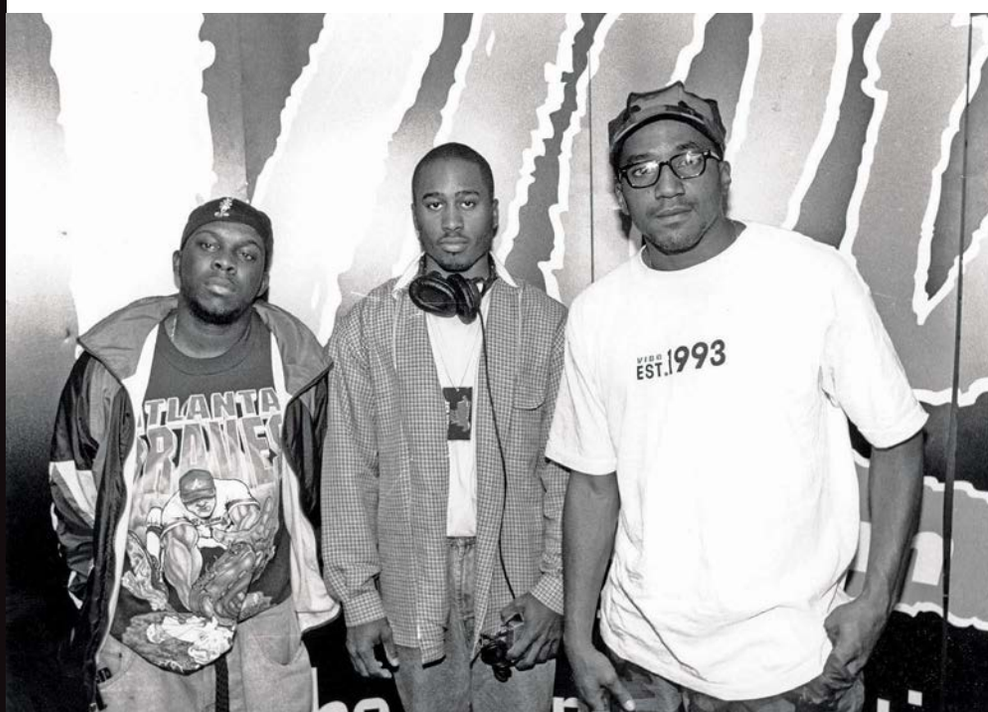
### END OF THE QUEST

Whether you like him or loathe him, where would hip-hop be today without Kanye? *The College Dropout* album sparked one of hip-hop's biggest-ever megastars. Without him and his own production style, pop music, let alone hip-hop, would be a totally different beast. Similarly, Pharrell Williams and André 3000 wouldn't be the artists they are today without Tribe. In fact, almost any of the alternative, anti-machismo hip-hop that is so prevalent today can be traced back to Tribe and *Midnight Marauders* as their greatest trophy, such is its artistic importance.

Neither *Beats, Rhymes And Life*, nor *The Love Movement* would hit as hard as either *The Low End Theory* or *Midnight Marauders*. Under the stress of travelling during the '94 Lollapalooza tour, internal disagreements, particularly between Phife and Q-Tip, became exacerbated and Phife's diabetes, which tragically would eventually kill him in 2016, got worse.

Five years after the release of *Midnight Marauders*, A Tribe Called Quest would split up. They returned in 2008 for the Rock The Bells gig to help finance treatment for Phife's worsening diabetes and again in 2016 for the release of their last record "*We Got It From Here… Thank You 4 Your Service*", which arrived shortly after Phife's death. Their latest record was a triumph, and was arguably their best since *Midnight Marauders*, but 9 November 1993 remains the apex of their career; possibly even the apex of hip-hop itself. ●

**After *Midnight Marauders*, ATCQ released two further albums before splitting, then reunited for 2016's *"We Got It From Here... Thank You 4 Your Service"***



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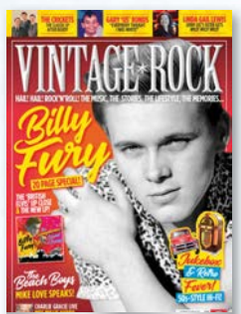


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# THE ESSENTIAL

# Laurel Canyon

The artists of the Laurel Canyon movement were a mellow, yet tightly knit bunch who formed bands, wrote songs, partied hard and slept together and, as **Gary Tipp** details, released an incredible catalogue of music…

Laurel Canyon is a mountainous neighbourhood located in the Hollywood Hills district of Los Angeles, California. With the birth of the film industry in 1910, it attracted a host of movie people, including Tom Mix, Clara Bow, Harry Houdini and even Bela Lugosi. Many of the English Tudor- and Spanish-style homes built around this time survive in the Canyon today, while some were burnt down by careless rockstars.

The Canyon is also one of rock music's most fabled locations. During the late 60s and early 70s, this is where Crosby, Stills, Nash and, latterly, Young got together to pool their collective talents. This is where the ladies of the canyon, Joni Mitchell, Carole King, Carly Simon and others poured their heart and soul into deeply personal songs. Sensitive straggly-haired men such as Jackson Browne and James Taylor got in on the act, as well.

With its proximity to the Sunset Strip, Laurel Canyon was also the drug-friendly, party playground of Frank Zappa, The Monkees (specifically Peter Tork and Micky Dolenz), Arthur Lee's Love, Gram Parsons and countless others.

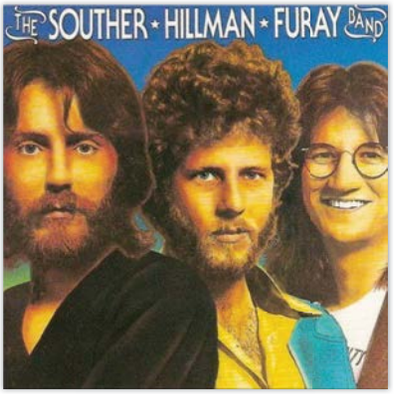
It inspired Jim Morrison to write *Love Street*, Graham Nash to compose *Our House* and The Mamas And The Papas to sing *Twelve Thirty (Young Girls Are Coming To The Canyon)*. UK blues legend John Mayall was so enamoured with the place he recorded a whole album about it (*Blues From Laurel Canyon*); at the time, he was only on holiday and had yet to move there.

It was also, crucially, where businessmen such as Asylum's David Geffen and Elektra's Jac Holzman were content to run their labels and develop their roster.

## MELLOW SCENE

The scene is associated primarily with attractive brooding singer-songwriters writing heartfelt, confessional albums about getting off with other attractive brooding singer-songwriters, who, in turn, wrote heartfelt confessional albums about the experience. However, it was also a fertile breeding ground for country-rock, with The Byrds, Michael Nesmith, Poco, The Flying Burrito Brothers and the Eagles all loosely part of the same movement For the most part, what they all have in common (Frank Zappa being a notable exception) is that mellow, laid-back South Californian sound; a product of the warm climate and the beautiful surroundings.

We've foregone chronological order for this list, and have ordered the albums on musical merit, longevity and an even more subjective factor: Laurel Canyon-ness.




40

## THE SOUTHER-HILLMAN-FURAY BAND

### THE SOUTHER-HILLMAN -FURAY BAND (1974)

One of the clunkier named country-rock supergroups of the era, SHF formed at the suggestion of industry impresario David Geffen in an obvious grab for CSNY-style superstardom. Across the course of the debut album, echoes of former glories were evident, but conflicting egos and a lack of genuine chemistry meant the trio soon fizzled out.

*Rarest* 1974 Asylum **£10/£15**
*Latest* Out of press

39

## HOMECOMING

### AMERICA (1972)

With their US Air Force fathers stationed at South Ruislip, the folk-rock trio America, ironically enough, developed their mellow SoCal sound in London. The success of the self-titled debut facilitated a return to native shores with follow-up *Homecoming* recorded at The Record Plant in LA. It proved to be a career high point and spawned hit single *Ventura Highway.*

*Rarest* 1972 Warner Bros **£10/£15**
*Latest* 2013 Music On Vinyl **£15**

## 38 INSTANT REPLAY
### THE MONKEES (1969)

The Monkees may not have been the quintessential Laurel Canyon band, but they were established fixtures on the party scene. *Instant Replay* was the group's first album after the cancellation of their TV show and also the departure of Peter Tork. Despite these setbacks, it was one of their best, featuring both Stephen Stills and Neil Young on guitar.

*Rarest* 1969 RCA **£35**
*Latest* Out of press

## 36 NO SECRETS
### CARLY SIMON (1972)

Carly Simon may have been born in The Bronx, but the singer-songwriter quickly adapted to Californian life with hubby James Taylor. Her third studio album *No Secrets* made her an international star, with the enigmatic *You're So Vain* a fixture on untold radio playlists. The album was recorded at Trident Studios: Jagger and McCartney popped in to help out.

*Rarest* 1972 Elektra **£10**
*Latest* 2009 Friday (import) **£15**

## 34 LAUREL CANYON
### JACKIE DESHANNON (1969)

Writer and performer DeShannon had a long and interesting career that never quite broke through to superstardom. In 1964, she toured with The Beatles, and has co-writing credits with both Jimmy Page and Randy Newman. She moved out west from New York and paid respects to her new surroundings with this titular album of country-soul.

*Rarest* **1969** Imperial (gatefold, import) **£15**
*Latest* Out of press

## 37 THREE DOG NIGHT
### THREE DOG NIGHT (1969)

Primarily song interpreters, Three Dog Night's choice of what material to cover was often inspired, with Harry Nilsson's lonesome *One* their breakthrough hit. The lack of original material meant they weren't taken as seriously as the music merited. The band's name originates from an aboriginal expression about the number of dingoes needed to keep warm on a cold night.

*Rarest* 1969 Stateside **£15**
*Latest* Out of press

## 35 BOOGIE WITH CANNED HEAT
### CANNED HEAT (1968)

Members of Canned Heat shared a house on Lookout Mountain Avenue, right next door to Joni Mitchell's place, until the place burnt to the ground in a fire. Formed by a couple of hardcore blues enthusiasts, the band's brand of electrified endless boogie is best represented by their second album, featuring the huge hit *On The Road Again*.

*Rarest* 1968 Liberty **£40**
*Latest* 2014 Pure Pleasure **£18**

## 33 FANFARE
### JONATHAN WILSON (2013)

Producer and performer Jonathan Wilson is seemingly on a one-man mission to add to Laurel Canyon's musical legacy. Over the four sides of his expansive second album, *Fanfare*, he reverentially captures the early-70s atmospherics; skilfully managing to avoid pastiche. The record's credibility is boosted no end by the presence of original scenesters, David Crosby, Graham Nash and Jackson Browne.

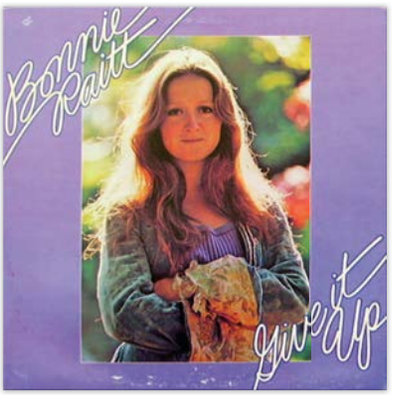
*Rarest* 2013 Bella Union **£25**
*Latest* 2017 Bella Union **£20**

## 32 HAPPY TOGETHER

**THE TURTLES (1967)**

Due to the ridiculous catchiness of the big hit, The Turtles are regarded as a novelty act, but the psychedelic folk-pop of the band's third album bears witness that there was a lot more to them than just a few minutes of sunshine pop. Howard Kaylan and Mark Volman, the band's leaders, went on to join Zappa's Mothers Of Invention.

*Rarest* 1970 London (mono) **£25**
*Latest* 2013 Manifesto **£15**




## 30 GIVE IT UP

**BONNIE RAITT**
**WARNER BROS (1972)**

In her early 20s, Raitt was living in Laurel Canyon and a regular on the LA club scene. She was also signed to Warner Bros, and her second album features her trademark blend of blues, folk and a splash of mellow rock. She received critical success in the 70s, but had to hold on until the next decade for stardom.

*Rarest* 1972 Warner Bros (gatefold) **£10**
*Latest* 2013 Music On Vinyl **£15**

## 28 ALONE TOGETHER

**DAVE MASON**
**HARVEST (1970)**

Dave Mason is best known as the guitarist in Traffic's original line-up and for penning the trippy-dippy *Hole In My Shoe*. After leaving the band, he made his way out to Hollywood. Featuring a starry crop of LA musicians, his initial solo outing is a long-lost classic. Also, the first US pressing was on splatter-effect marble vinyl.

*Rarest* 1970 Harvest (gatefold, die-cut) **£50**
*Latest* 2018 Friday Music (US import) **£20**

## 31 PICKIN' UP THE PIECES

**POCO (1969)**

When Richie Furay lost his regular gig with Buffalo Springfield, he formed Poco and became embroiled in the developing country-rock scene. The debut album, *Pickin' Up The Pieces*, didn't sell a whole load at the time, but is now acknowledged as one of the movement's landmark releases. Among the band's founding members was Randy Meisner, latterly of the Eagles.

*Rarest* 1969 Epic (US import) **£15**
*Latest* Out of press

## 29 WARREN ZEVON

**WARREN ZEVON**
**ASYLUM (1976)**

Zevon's solo deal was, in part, as a result of his friendship with Jackson Browne. The songs on his solo debut, however, are far darker and harder-edged than traditional mellow Laurel Canyon fare. Nonetheless, that didn't stop the cream of the scene from helping him out, with several Eagles, two fifths of Fleetwood Mac and an Everly Brother involved.

*Rarest* 1976 Asylum **£15/£20**
*Latest* 2015 Music On Vinyl **£15**

## 27 THE WOLFKING OF LA

**JOHN PHILLIPS**
**STATESIDE (1970)**

Without a Mama in sight, the former head Papa assembled a fine collection of country-inflected songs for this hidden treasure of a debut album. Phillips also put together a great studio band including James Burton, Buddy Emmons and Red Rhodes. The album was far from a commercial success and Papa John's career subsequently spiralled downward into heroin addiction.

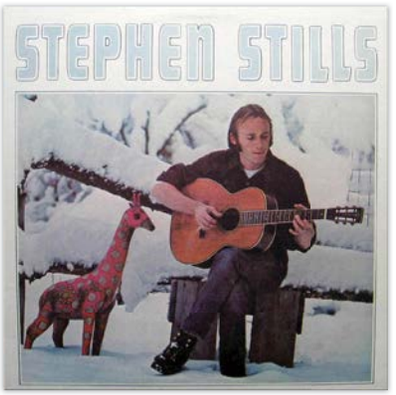
*Rarest* 1970 Stateside **£40/£45**
*Latest* 2016 Varese Vintage (US import) **£18**

## 26 MAGNETIC SOUTH

### MICHAEL NESMITH & THE FIRST NATIONAL BAND (1970)

Long before the Eagles and just about around the same time as Gram Parsons, Mike Nesmith, the cool, sardonic one in The Monkees – him with the woolly hat – was an early pioneering force in country-rock. His debut release *Magnetic South* is a cosmic slice of rocking Americana. Its follow-up, *Loose Salute,* isn't half bad, either.

*Rarest* 1970 RCA
*Latest* 2018 Sundazed (US import) **£20**




## 24 STEPHEN STILLS

### STEPHEN STILLS (1970)

Laurel Canyon resident Stephen Stills lived on Shady Oak Road in a house he bought from Monkee Peter Tork. As well as Crosby and Nash, his debut album featured guest spots from Booker T. Jones, Ringo Starr, Jimi Hendrix and Eric Clapton, which is a pretty decent line-up. Opener *Love The One You're With* provided Stills with a US hit single.

*Rarest* 1970 Atlantic **£35/£40**
*Latest* 2010 Atlantic **£15**

## 22 THE GILDED PALACE OF SIN

### THE FLYING BURRITO BROTHERS (1969)

After migrating from The Byrds, Gram Parsons teamed up with Chris Hillman (himself a former Byrd) to form The Flying Burrito Brothers. The first album fused country, rock and soul so seamlessly that a musical genre developed out of it. It was just a shame that Parsons lacked the discipline to see his vision for Cosmic American Music through.

*Rarest* 1969 A&M **£40**
*Latest* 2017 A&M (US import) **£20**

## 25 BLUES FROM LAUREL CANYON

### JOHN MAYALL (1968)

The Godfather of British blues' first album after the break-up of the Bluesbreakers was a concept album of sorts, a musical diary of a three-week vacation spent in Laurel Canyon. It made such an impression on Mayall that a year later, he packed his guitar cases and took up residence. A young, pre-Stones Mick Taylor is present on guitar.

*Rarest* 1968 Decca (gatefold) **£50**
*Latest* 2007 Decca **£20**

## 23 PARALLELOGRAMS

### LINDA PERHACS (1970)

Cult album *Parallelograms* was recorded when Linda Perhacs, a lady of the Canyon, was a full-time dental hygienist and a part-time writer of songs. Her debut album is a hypnotic psych-folk classic that came out of nowhere and quickly returned there, until resurfacing as a touchstone for the freak-folk scene may decades later.

*Rarest* 1970 Kapp Records **£150**
*Latest* 2014 Anthology (US import) **£30**

## 21 JOHN DAVID SOUTHER

### JD SOUTHER (1972)

Having shared a flat with Glenn Frey and dated Linda Ronstadt, Souther was a well-connected member of the Laurel Canyon set, but his profile was higher as a writer of songs for others rather than as an interpreter of his own. Saying that, his first two albums (the other being *Black Rose*) are near-perfect slices of mellow country.

*Rarest* 1972 Asylum **£15**
*Latest* Out of press

20

## DIXIE CHICKEN

### LITTLE FEAT (1973)

Little Feat leader Lowell George was born in Hollywood and didn't have far to travel to take up residence in Laurel Canyon. As a former member of Zappa's Mothers, he was a big part of the scene, but his band's all-important third album swapped the mellow Cali sounds for a great big swampy slice of New Orleans funk.

*Rarest* 1973 Warner Bros (green label) **£15/£20**
*Latest* 2008 Warner Bros **£15**

18

## SONGS FOR BEGINNERS

### GRAHAM NASH (1971)

Nash recorded his first solo album in the wake of his split with Joni Mitchell, and many of the songs lament the time spent together; the poignant *Simple Man* was written on the afternoon of the break-up. Nash assembles a galaxy of stars to help him including David Crosby, Jerry Garcia and Neil Young (under the pseudonym 'Joe Yankee').

*Rarest* 1971 Atlantic **£25**
*Latest* 2010 Rhino **£18**

16

## HEART LIKE A WHEEL

### LINDA RONSTADT (1974)

*Heart Like A Wheel* was Ronstadt's third solo album since leaving folk-rock outfit The Stone Poneys and the first to break through to the mainstream. Produced by Peter Asher, the album was the perfect platform for her incredible interpretative talents. A critical and commercial success, it paved the way for LA's developing soft-rock scene.

*Rarest* 1974 Asylum **£10/£15**
*Latest* 2017 Capitol **£18**

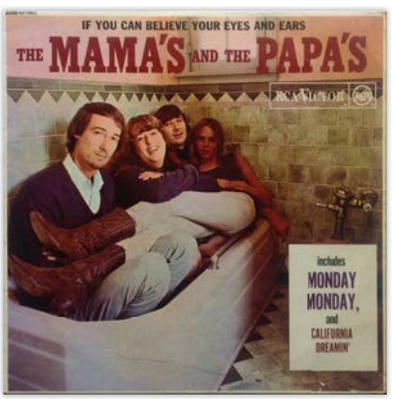
19

## DESPERADO

### EAGLES (1973)

Multi-million-seller *Hotel California* was pretty much the death rattle of the Laurel Canyon scene, while second album *Desperado* echoes less cynical times. Recorded in London by Stones producer Glyn Johns, the songs are, ironically, all based on themes of the Old West, including crowd-pleaser *Tequila Sunrise*. The iconic artwork sees the band dressed as the gun-toting outlaws.

*Rarest* 1973 Asylum **£20**
*Latest* 2014 Asylum **£15**




17

## IF YOU CAN BELIEVE YOUR EYES AND EARS

### THE MAMAS AND THE PAPAS (1966)

The sunshine pop of The Mamas And The Papas was never more radiant than on their debut album. Showcasing the quartet's spectacular harmonies, hit singles *Monday, Monday* and *California Dreamin'* brought folk-rock into the mainstream. The sleeve on the first press of the US release featured the image of a toilet and was subsequently banned.

*Rarest* 1966 RCA Victor **£20/£25**
*Latest* 2010 Sundazed (US import) **£20**

15

## FOR EVERYMAN

### JACKSON BROWNE (1973)

Equal parts bluesy folk and piano-driven ballads, Laurel Canyon resident Jackson Browne followed up his self-titled debut with another plaintive offering. The serene songwriter was able to enlist a star-studded supporting cast including his buddies Glenn Frey and Don Henley, while Elton John, credited as 'Rockaday Johnnie', contributes some piano.

*Rarest* 1973 Asylum **£20**
*Latest* 1975 Asylum **£5**

## 14 WAITING FOR THE SUN
**THE DOORS (1968)**

During the recording of The Doors' third album, Jim Morrison was shacked up with his muse Pamela Courson, living on Rothdell Trail, or 'Love Street' as they preferred to call it. The album was a considerably less bombastic affair than the previous two, which was no bad thing, and contained the band's second No. 1 hit *Hello, I Love You*.

*Rarest* 1968 Elektra (gatefold, orange label, mono) **£200**
*Latest* 2013 Elektra **£20**

## 12 HEART FOOD
**JUDEE SILL (1973)**

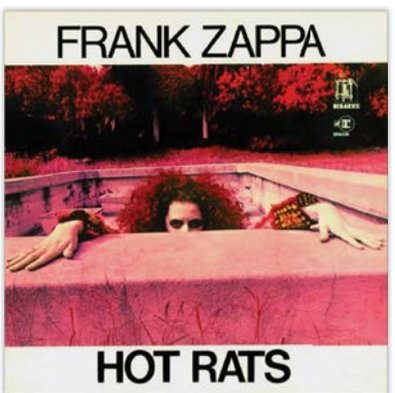
Before releasing two albums on the Asylum label in the early 70s, Judee Sill's world contained heroin addiction, jail time and even prostitution. Despite the hard life, her music was uplifting, spiritual and touching on the transcendent. Backed by, among others, Spooner Oldham, Chris Etheridge and Doug Dillard, *Heart Food* is regarded as her world-weary masterpiece.

*Rarest* 1973 Asylum **£30**
*Latest* 2017 Asylum **£20**

## 10 FOREVER CHANGES
**LOVE (1967)**

During the time of recording, Arthur Lee and co. all lived together in a decaying old mansion in Laurel Canyon called The Castle, once owned by Bela Lugosi. The band's 24/7 open-door policy was causing its members to frazzle round the edges, and *Forever Changes* is the crazed result of this perpetual, psychedelic love-in.

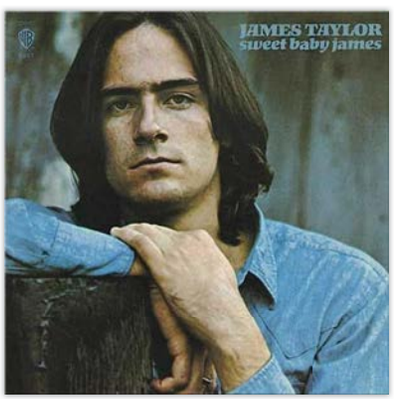
*Rarest* 1967 Elektra (orange label, mono) **£200**
*Latest* 2015 Elektra **£15**




## 13 HOT RATS
**FRANK ZAPPA (1969)**

Frank Zappa was a long-term Laurel Canyon resident and stayed even after the singer-songwriters had split. He famously lived on Laurel Canyon Boulevard in a log cabin with a bowling alley in the basement. *Hot Rats*, his first album without The Mothers, remains a jam-heavy jazz-rock masterwork; the man himself described it as "a movie for your ears".

*Rarest* 1970 Reprise (gatefold, 'riverboat' label) **£60/£70**
*Latest* 2016 Zappa Records **£17**




## 11 SWEET BABY JAMES
**JAMES TAYLOR (1970)**

After recording his debut in the UK for The Beatles' Apple label, Taylor decamped to Laurel Canyon, adding to the ranks of straggly-haired, denim-clad, introspective singer-songwriters. There, he recorded his breakthrough album, *Sweet Baby James*, which included hit single *Fire And Rain*, a reflective song telling of his early experiences of time spent in and out of mental institutions.

*Rarest* 1971 Warner Bros (orange label) **£25**
*Latest* 2017 Warner Bros (US import) **£20**

## 9 RUMOURS
**FLEETWOOD MAC (1977)**

The first time the *Rumours* line-up Fleetwood Mac met was in Mick Fleetwood's rented house in Laurel Canyon. Armed with a serious array of songwriting talent, a mountain of cocaine and a sophisticated Cali-pop sound, the band hit previously unchartered heights of success. It was about as far away from the band's hard-edged British-blues origins as you could imagine.

*Rarest* 1977 Warner Bros (gatefold) **£35**
*Latest* 2011 Warner Bros **£15**

## 8 CROSBY, STILLS & NASH

### CROSBY, STILLS & NASH (1969)

The harmonies and the confessional songwriting of CSN's debut has come to define the Laurel Canyon sound, with opener *Suite: Judy Blue Eyes* as archetypal as it gets. According to legend, the out-of-order photo for the sleeve was taken before the trio had decided on a name; when they returned to reshoot, the building had burnt to the ground.

*Rarest* 1969 Atlantic (gatefold) **£30**
*Latest* 2009 Atlantic **£15**

## 6 YOUNGER THAN YESTERDAY

### THE BYRDS (1967)

With Chris Hillman plugging the songwriting gap caused by Gene Clark's sudden departure, The Byrds' fourth album finds them at their most accessible and charming. With Monkees-bashing opener *So You Want To Be A Rock 'N' Roll Star* setting the jazzy, psychedelic tone, *Younger Than Yesterday* is a high-flying Californian folk-rock classic.

*Rarest* 1967 CBS (mono) **£50**
*Latest* 2012 Columbia **£18**

## 7 AFTER THE GOLD RUSH

### NEIL YOUNG (1970)

The contrary Canadian followed up the stellar success of *Déjà Vu* with one of his most loved records. While his bandmates lived in Laurel Canyon, Young had moved to a different ZIP Code and a chunk of the album was recorded in a makeshift studio in his Topanga home. The album's raw, confessional style continues to wrench hearts.

*Rarest* 1970 Reprise (gatefold, lyric sheet) **£50/£60**
*Latest* 2010 Reprise **£20**

## 5 TAPESTRY

### CAROLE KING (1971)

Carole King had written a string of hits for others as a songwriter in New York's Brill Building, but on *Tapestry*, she was singing for herself. Its perfectly crafted songs marked it as one of the quintessential singer-songwriter albums of the 70s. The cover image depicts King and Telemachus (her cat) at repose in her Laurel Canyon home.

*Rarest* 1971 A&M **£15**
*Latest* 2016 Sony **£15**

## 4 BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD AGAIN

**BUFFALO SPRINGFIELD (1967)**

Buffalo Springfield were formed when Neil Young and bassist Bruce Palmer exited Canada and bumped into Stephen Stills while driving along Sunset. With the band's name 'borrowed' from a brand of steamroller, Buffalo Springfield's songwriting power trio of Young, Stills and Richie Furay combined to produce a timeless and stupidly influential release.

*Rarest* 1968 Atlantic (plum label, mono) **£80**
*Latest* 1975 ATCO **£20**

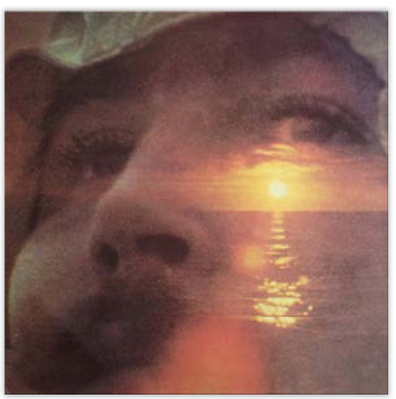
## 2 LADIES OF THE CANYON

**JONI MITCHELL**

**REPRISE (1970)**

Moving away from the airy folkiness of her first two albums, the singer-songwriter's transitional third opens her up as an artist of boundless talent. It's a fascinating snapshot of Canyon life in the post-hippie era and is the album where CSNY's influence on her work is the most pervading. *Big Yellow Taxi*, *The Circle Game* and *Woodstock* all feature.

*Rarest* 1970 Reprise (gatefold, steamboat label) **£35**
*Latest* 2013 Reprise **£15**



## 3 IF I COULD ONLY REMEMBER MY NAME

**DAVID CROSBY**

**ATLANTIC (1971)**

Surfing the wave of *Déjà Vu*, David Crosby invited his mates to help him out on his solo debut and Neil Young, Joni Mitchell, Grace Slick and Jerry Garcia, among others, answered the call. The result was a cosmic-cowboy masterpiece that still sounds as fresh as a daisy. Crosby didn't make another solo album until 1989.

*Rarest* 1971 Atlantic (gatefold, red/plum label) **£45**
*Latest* 2010 Rhino **£14**

## 1 DÉJÀ VU

**CROSBY, STILLS, NASH & YOUNG**

**ATLANTIC (1970)**

Crosby, Stills and Nash were bolstered by the arrival of Neil Young into their fold. Despite a famously fractious recording process, with clashing egos racking up over 500 hours of studio time, the album's magical harmonies and memorable songs mark it out as a milestone of the movement. It remains the quintessential Laurel Canyon LP. ●

*Rarest* 1970 Atlantic (gatefold, past-on photo) **£60**
*Latest* 2011 Atlantic **£20**

# RECORD COLLECTOR SHEFFIELD

# THE VINYL REVIVAL

In this extract from new book *The Vinyl Revival And The Stores That Made It Happen*, author **Graham Jones** visits Sheffield vinyl guru Barry Everard

Barry Everard is the music man of Sheffield, responsible for giving many bands a helping hand in the early days of their fledgling careers. Def Leppard, ABC, Human League, Pulp, Richard Hawley, Comsat Angels and Gomez are just some of them. Music suggested by Barry was used in Sheffield's most famous film, *The Full Monty*.

Barry has had his ups and downs over the last few years. He has found it increasingly difficult to make a reasonable profit, and many times, has felt it is time to call it a day. Then he gets a regular customer coming up, giving him a big hug, saying how much he loves the shop and making him promise never to close it. Moments like that have persuaded him to carry on serving the good people of Sheffield.

"It's more than just making a living," Barry says. "It's a calling, it's something we're almost driven to do, and we feel a deep responsibility of doing the job right." Even so, Barry insists that shoppers must understand that record shops are not charities. He bemoans the fact that so many people come into the shop, check their mobile, then tell him that the app they've just consulted shows they can buy the same CD 48p cheaper from an online retailer.

Barry has thousands of items that he is selling cheaper, though it can be difficult to convince people that the internet is not always the better option. Amazon has done a fantastic job of giving the impression that it cannot be beaten on price. Barry has a saying which he bases his business practices on:

*"Prices are vanity*
*Margins for sanity*
*Prices for show*
*Margins are dough"*

Record Collector in Sheffield recently celebrated its 33-and-a-third birthday

To survive today, record shops must have a presence on the internet. Record Collector is doing great business, selling collectable vinyl online. What's more, the resurgence of vinyl has had new customers beating a path to its door, so much so that the shop is now taking more money on the format than CDs.

Another change has been the return of students. Sheffield is a university city and for many years, the students were the core customers for Barry. When downloading came along, students embraced the new technology and the numbers buying physical product from him dwindled to a trickle. Now the students are back, shopping in the store for vinyl.

## COMEDY STORE

Barry is having a great time recommending records for students who now shop there. For him, nothing beats introducing somebody to an artist, and the next time they come into the shop, they say that artist is fantastic and ask what else there is by them. Vinyl customers are less price-sensitive than people who buy CDs and are prepared to pay for what has become a premium, collectable product.

The shop has also provided many moments of record-store humour. A customer purchases a record by The Specials. The next day he brings it back, complaining that he didn't receive his gift as promised by the sticker on the album bearing the legend "includes 'Free Nelson Mandela'."

One of Barry's regular customers, a Roxy Music fan called Robin, was hospitalised after suffering a brain haemorrhage. As he started

## "IT'S A CALLING, IT'S SOMETHING WE'RE ALMOST DRIVEN TO DO, AND WE FEEL A DEEP RESPONSIBILITY OF DOING THE JOB RIGHT"

coming out of the coma, one of the doctors revived him by patting his face and asking him: "What's your name?"

"Virginia Plain," Robin responded, quoting the lyrical sign-off from the end of Roxy Music's first hit. "Oh dear, he thinks he's Virginia Wade," one of the nurses said. Robin has since made a full recovery.

Barry is also surprised that some people in Sheffield get confused between a classic soul singer and a type of crumpet: twice in his retailing career he has been asked for records by Wilson Pikelet.

The shop celebrated its 33-and-a-third birthday recently. Two of Sheffield's favourite sons, Richard Hawley and Martin Simpson, both sang at an unforgettable party to celebrate the occasion. Another celebrity, Johnny Marr, came into the shop and brought a pile of vinyl albums to the counter. "Are you Barry?" he asked. "Yes I am," Barry replied. "I understand you're something of a legend in these parts," Johnny said.

For Barry, it's moments like that which make the struggle to keep going worthwhile.

### YO! BUM RUSH THE SHOW

Record Collector became the scene of a story that has since passed into popular folklore, when Barry pulled off a coup by arranging for American rap crew Public Enemy to do an in-store signing before their gig supporting The Prodigy at Sheffield Arena in November 2015.

Arriving somewhat later than expected at the shop to find a large crowd waiting to greet them, the band were happy to chat and sign copies of the new album, but were far from finished when their taxi arrived to pick them up at 6pm. When they eventually emerged from the shop to set off for the gig, the taxi had disappeared.

With the band due on stage at 7.30, there was no time to waste. Barry asked local photographer Kevin Wells, who had been among the fans who had come to get his CD signed, if he could give the band a lift to Sheffield Arena. With Chuck D in the passenger seat and Flavor Flav, together with two of the band's crew, crammed in the back of his Ford Focus, Kevin set off. Although the traffic was bad, Kevin knew all the shortcuts, so they were making good time. Even so, the band's phones were constantly ringing, with cries of: "Where the hell are you?" among the more printable enquiries from the other end.

Kevin put on a CD of Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody* and was amazed to discover that Public Enemy were fans of the song. As the voices rose to an operatic crescendo, he found himself living a *Wayne's World* moment for real with Public Enemy headbanging and singing along to the song – a sight that he will never forget seeing in his rear-view mirror.

Lewis Hamilton would have been impressed by Kevin's driving. They reached Sheffield Arena in less than 20 minutes, only to be stopped by a security guard who didn't believe that Public Enemy would turn up to their own show crammed in to the back of a Ford Focus. The rappers were eventually let ▶

through and, thanks to Kevin, they made it on to the stage just in time. They invited him to be their guest of honour for the evening, but Kevin had another gig of his own to go to that night – he was due to take photos of Scouting For Girls at another venue.

The story was dramatised in an episode of Sky Arts TV series *Urban Myths*, in which the *Life On Mars* star Philip Glenister played the part of Kevin in a comic re-telling of the tale.

Barry is happy to offer words of wisdom based on his 40 years of experience selling vinyl. "The best bit of advice I can give any new record shop is to trust your own judgement. I am called Record Collector, as that is what I am. The shop is an extension of what was once a hobby.

"I always believed in vinyl and, over the years, amassed vast quantities of it, as I was convinced that in years to come, my hunches would pay off.

"What I did not see coming was the internet. That turned many of my vinyl hunches that cost me pennies, extremely profitable.

"In the early 1970s, David Bowie's self-titled first album on Deram could be found as deletions in Woolworths for 49p. I bought every copy I saw. The electronics retailer Tandy started stocking records for a while. Somehow, they would obtain RCA deletions which they would clear out at 29p. I would take quantity of anything interesting. I was in South Wales and called into a shop in Swansea on the day of release of the limited-edition LP *Live At The Padget Rooms, Penarth* from local rockers Man. I knew only 1,000 had been pressed, yet this shop seemed to have about half the stock. I bought a box lot for £1 each."

## MOTOR CITY MAYHEM

"In Sheffield, we had a motor-parts dealer selling deleted and overstock vinyl. A lot of it was on John Peel's Dandelion record label. Artists such as Gene Vincent, Kevin Coyne and Clifford T. Ward were on sale for 29p. I bought as much as I could. A few weeks later, they cleared out what was left for 15p. It was time to have a second bite of the cherry.

"Many vinyl fans in Manchester will recall Global Records. They were housed in a huge warehouse and would import vinyl from the USA. Prices were between 29p and 79p and you could pick up artists such as Neil Young, Frank Zappa, The 13th Floor Elevators and thousands more. I was one of their best customers, so would often be offered even lower prices.

"Of course, you always think about the one that got away, as opposed to the hundreds of brilliant deals I did. For me, it was when Global offered me 200 Electric Prunes albums at 15p. I was struggling for storage space, so politely declined. I still cringe whenever I see copies being sold over the internet and the prices they are being sold for.

"Then there was the day I lost a million – or, more accurately, failed to take advantage of an opportunity that would have made me £1 million. I remember a day wasted checking out the branches of London's Harlequin Records. Every bargain rack in every store was full of this record featuring a cover where the band members' heads had been superimposed onto cats' bodies

**"WHAT I DID NOT SEE COMING WAS THE INTERNET. THAT TURNED MANY OF MY VINYL HUNCHES THAT COST ME PENNIES EXTREMELY PROFITABLE"**

Record Collector customer Kevin Wells gives Public Enemy a lift to an arena gig after a signing session

## RECORD COLLECTOR

233-235 Fulwood Road, Sheffield, South Yorkshire S10 3BA

**TEL** 01142 668493

**recordcollectorsheffield.com**
recordcollector1978@gmail.com
**@RCSheffield**

**OPEN** Monday-Saturday 10am-5.45pm

**ESTABLISHED** 1978

**STOCK** Vinyl, CD, pre-owned, in-stores

painted by a nine-year-old. Well over 1,000 copies at 50p each. No wonder that didn't sell, I thought, and left the lot. So, it seems, did everyone else. The title? *Pussy Plays* by 1960s psychedelic band Pussy. Value now? £1,000 each.

"I was certain that one day, picture discs would be highly collectable. Record companies would give away vast quantities to chart-return shops so, as these shops had not paid any money for them, they would clear them out for around 50p. I'd tour these shops each week, buying what I thought would become collectable. It turned out to be a shrewd move, as that 50p stock often sells for between £25 and £50.

"Always put your customers first. Whatever bargains I bought, I would always display in the shop and I would store any surplus, in the belief it would one day be collectable. In the days of record store carnage that you highlighted in your first book [*Last Shop Standing: Whatever Happened To Record Shops?]*, it was the vinyl that I had bought all those years ago that kept me going through those difficult times.

### LAST CHANCE TO SEE

"Don't just rely on the record companies for your stock. I have bought off record libraries, radio stations, businesses closing, wholesalers, etc. When you see clearance and sale lists being emailed to you, don't delete. Have a look and think, is there anything on this list that one day will be collectable? This is how Record Collector has kept going through the tough times and thrived in the good. You can do it, too, if you go with your gut feeling."

One of the joys of visiting Record Collector is that Barry is a great raconteur and is always happy to have a chat and tell you some of his fabulous anecdotes: but please visit before it's too late. After 40 years of selling vinyl, retirement beckons for this retailing veteran. Before he closes the doors for the last time, it would be nice to think that his contribution to Sheffield music might be recognised by the music industry, the city of Sheffield and the country itself. ●

### WIN!

*We've got five copies of The Vinyl Revival by Graham Jones to give away. For your chance to win one, visit longlivevinyl.net/revivalcomp*

The Trip

# Liverpool

**Mark Elliott** takes a trip to Liverpool and looks beyond the Fab Four for vinyl delights

When John Lennon was murdered in December 1980, it accelerated my obsession with music. True, I'd already been seduced by the soundtrack to *Grease* and had started buying the odd 7" single, but the avalanche of Beatles books and magazines launched off the back of the tragedy offered something different. This was a band – *the* band – with a backstory and a back catalogue like no other. I had their discography memorised in weeks. When it came to a birthday-gift choice between K-Tel's *Chart Explosion* or a re-press of *Sgt. Pepper's…*, pop's greatest LP was the one I picked (despite the temptation of Madness and Kelly Marie).

So Liverpool, for me – as for so many – is somewhere truly special. One of the world's most-famous musical cities, I have been a handful of times over the years. Ferried across the Mersey? You bet; grabbed a pint at a reimagined The Cavern? Certainly; but cratedigging hadn't been an option until this trip.

I didn't know what to expect. Some locals will tell you they feel somewhat overshadowed by their bigger neighbour, but Manchester's buzzy vinyl scene isn't truly spectacular when measured against destinations such as Amsterdam, so surely a city this steeped in music could hold its own against its nearby rival.

I wondered whether the interest from more casual visitors in the Fab Four would push up Merseybeat prices and, in truth, where I could find it, that proved to be the case.

Almost every shop (like most record stores worldwide, actually) has a section devoted to The Beatles and their associated or solo releases. But they weren't rammed full of first-pressing copies of *Revolver,* as you might imagine. There's actually rather less of that stuff here than you'd expect (although a lot of new reissues; no doubt stocked to satisfy the more casual tourist after a memento).

What there's no shortage of, however, is Beatles. The influence of that magical era is everywhere and I'd challenge anyone not to get swept along in the nostalgia. I joined a National Trust tour of the childhood homes of Lennon and McCartney, which was simply fantastic. It's absolutely my top recommendation of 'other stuff', if you can bag one of the limited slots.

So, should you play the tourist, or is the shopping just too compelling? The city centre has a good concentration of decent stores (including one that doubles as a destination for those following in the footsteps of the Fab Four). A handful lie further out and will prove tough to tick off if you don't have long here (or a car). There's a lot of soul (northern, of course, but other strands, too) and indie, but – classics notwithstanding – marginally less rock than I have seen elsewhere. Pop prices were standard and I sourced some good items. So, roll up for a magical mystery tour of this former European Capital Of Culture…

***Roll up for a magical mystery tour of this former European Capital Of Culture***

*Illustration* Ben Talon

### ❶ 81 RENSHAW
**81 Renshaw Street, L1 2SJ**
**81renshaw.co.uk**
*Opening hours*
Noon to 11pm Wednesday to Sunday

### ❷ 69A
**75 Renshaw Street, L1 2SJ**
**69aliverpool.co.uk**
*Opening hours*
10.30am to 6pm Monday to Saturday; noon to 6pm Sunday

### ❸ POP BOUTIQUE
**110 Bold Street, L1 4HY**
**twitter.com/popvinyl_liv**
*Opening hours*
10.30am to 6pm Friday and Saturday; noon to 5pm Sunday

### ❹ DIG VINYL
**80 Bold Street, L1 4HR**
**digliverpool.co.uk**
*Opening hours*
10.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Saturday; 11am to 5pm Sunday

### ❺ PROBE RECORDS
**1 The Bluecoat, School Lane, L1 3BX**
**probe-records.co.uk**
*Opening hours*
9.30am to 6pm Monday to Saturday; 12.30pm to 5pm Sunday

### ❻ CULT VINYL
**Liverpool Antique Centre, 151 Great Howard Street, L3 7DL**
*Opening hours*
10am to 6pm Monday to Saturday; 10am to 3pm Sunday

### ❼ 3B RECORDS
**5 Slater Street, L1 4BW**
**3brecords.co.uk**
*Opening hours*
11am to 5pm Tuesday to Thursday; 11am to 6pm Friday and Saturday

### ❽ JACARANDA RECORDS
**The Jacaranda, 21-23 Slater Street, L1 4BW**
**facebook.com/thejacclub**
*Opening hours*
10am to 2am Monday to Wednesday; 10am to 6am Thursday to Sunday (pub hours; record shop usually opens around noon)

### ❾ JACARANDA RECORDS – PHASE ONE
**40 Seel Street, L1 4BE**
**jacarandarecords.co.uk**
*Opening hours*
Noon to midnight Monday to Thursday; Noon to 2am Friday and Saturday; Noon to 10pm Sunday

### ❿ MUSICAL BOX
**457 West Derby Road, L6 4BL**
*Opening hours*
9am to 5pm Monday to Saturday

## 1 81 RENSHAW

Staying out of the shadow of The Beatles is thrillingly impossible in this city – no better illustrated than by the first shop I visit. Situated on the edges of the town centre, 81 Renshaw is a fascinating business hybrid – a successful café, events venue and record shop housed in a building once home to Liverpool's legendary *Mersey Beat* newspaper – early champion of all things Fab. Today, a café and event space is on the ground floor, while you'll find the vinyl mostly downstairs (there are a few racks in the café). Once I navigate the descent down a level, I find a unit rammed with still-sealed pop and soul LPs from the late 1980s for £3 apiece. That keeps me busy for a good 20 minutes before I venture into the main shop, staffed by owner Neil Tilly. He tells me the venue offers a unique spin on Record Store Day, as he can set up shop in the large auditorium upstairs, creating something akin to an indoor market. "It's definitely become more of a social thing," he says, and a good job, too, based on the crowd he drew this year. Neil's pedigree is impressive: editing the classic Liverpool 1980s fanzine *Breakout*, running a label and an agency. Neil's stock is split evenly between new and second-hand, with a lot of good soul. He took over the site in 2016 and says the building yielded some unexpected treasure. "I found some boxes of old records still sealed in the old NEMS [the store managed by Brian Epstein] bags," he tells me. "The basement was like a scene from a horror movie when I started clearing it out, but that was a fantastic find."

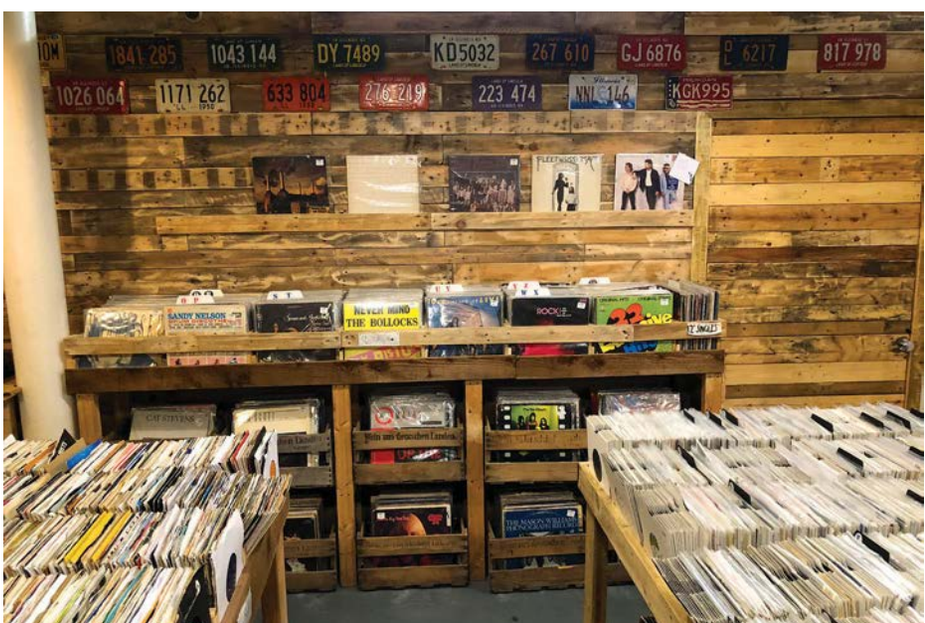
***81 Renshaw owner Neil Tilly's pedigree is impressive: editing classic Liverpool 1980s fanzine Breakout, running a label and an agency***

## 2 69A

A few doors down, this large and intriguing vintage shop promises a decent vinyl section and the cabinet tempting you in with the predictable 60s draws helps, but there are only a few racks here and prices are a touch on the steep end of the spectrum. No doubt, the casual buyer might find something inside, and there is some interesting stuff here. Given I've just started, I pass for a change and head down to the nearby Oxfam on Bold Street, where I've heard vinyl pickings are good. There are a few racks, but nothing of interest to me, with classical and MOR predominating. I do pick up a Bros annual but, for many of you, that will only accentuate the point.

## 3 POP BOUTIQUE

This is a very nice store with everything filed neatly and easy to flick through. There are a lot of 7" singles and a superb northern-soul section. It's the sort of shop you can really lose yourself in and prices are fair. There are a lot of imports and I'm told the owner makes frequent trips abroad to source the stock, while picking up the vintage clothing that takes up the ground-floor retail area. I love all the vintage radio sets and memorabilia and, once again, I'm reminded how much nicer the visiting experience is when a shop feels as if it's been blessed with a little TLC. One word of warning: the subterranean record section only opens Friday through Sunday, although the clothing store upstairs maintains regular trading hours. It's definitely worth planning your trip to the city around this.



## 4 DIG VINYL

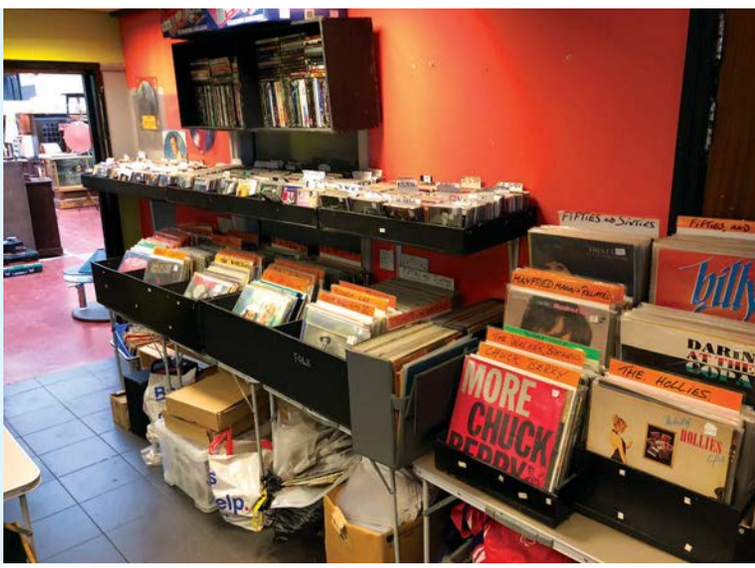
What is it with record shops in basements in this city? Virtually my third in a row is buried below ground, but this is another nicely presented store that shares its space with a café. You can sell as well as buy, and I catch a conversation between the long-suffering staff and a lady caller no doubt determined to retire on the proceeds of her small haul of vinyl. Again, every genre is covered. There's a lot of psych and krautrock, plus a huge amount of soul and dance. Second-hand dominates and I love the weird and wonderful peppered throughout the racks. I'm in a very Soft Cell vibe at the moment, given their glorious one-off at London's O2, and surprise myself by checking my hand-held database and realising I don't own a copy of *Memorabilia* – their first 12". That's rectified here, and I fill in one of my Take That gaps with the 7" of *Once You've Tasted Love*.

## 5 PROBE RECORDS

Now, this place is a Liverpool legend, famously once staffed by future stars such as Julian Cope, Pete Wylie (of Wah!), Frankie Goes To Hollywood's Paul Rutherford and, of course, Dead Or Alive's Pete Burns. Pete's withering put-downs and leftfield approach to customer service made the shop an institution back then. Its influence has soared over the city since its opening day in 1971, but the shop has moved a couple of times and now sits regally in the city centre with art hanging on its wall. A sort of gentrified gesture, perhaps. New vinyl predominates and it's curated carefully (no Belinda Carlisle reissues to be sourced here, more's the pity), but you can so easily soak up the atmosphere and reminisce about a time when stores such as this were the gatekeepers between the industry, emerging scenes and the product-hungry customer. While I'm browsing, I notice a handful of Japanese women taking photos outside the shop. I'm hoping they're Dead Or Alive fans (the act were massive in Asia) and, although the old Button Street site is a restaurant today, I'm hoping Pete is looking down with a flicker of that knowing smile hovering on his lips.

## 6 CULT VINYL

This store has not long moved from its former home in Grand Central Hall on Renshaw Street to a large warehouse further out of the city centre, billed the Liverpool Antique Centre. It's a good 15-minute walk from Albert Dock, although a taxi costs me a little over a fiver from the main shopping area. There's a lot here, but it doesn't have that slick, curatorial finesse that I witness elsewhere. I would estimate a couple of hours would give you time to go through everything, and I have a decent stab, picking up a VG+ copy of Dionne Warwick's *Valley Of The Dolls*. There's a good amount of parking outside, which will be helpful if you want to see the other, more suburban stores (and there is a palpable shortage of buses and taxis around here, when I eventually emerge). The centre has some other stalls with a bit of vinyl and neat vintage memorabilia. Ever heard of a band called The Beatles? Thought so.



The Trip

# GETTING THERE

**Two hours and 15 minutes on a train from London's Euston will bring you to the heart of Liverpool, and the city's airport – named after John Lennon – is around seven miles from the centre. Manchester is the nearest international hub, although Liverpool John Lennon does cover a lot of routes into and out of continental Europe. Regional rail services connect the city with a variety of UK towns and the port is situated on the M62, M58 and M56 motorways. If you're really after a grand entrance, consider arriving by ferry (Belfast, Dublin or the Isle Of Man) or cruise ship. Once here, there's actually an impressive amount of parking, and the city is peppered with decent bus services.**

## 7 3B RECORDS

This dance specialist is the place to go to source nu-disco, house and techno, but don't be fooled, there is a healthy 'Guilty Pleasures' section rammed with Ace Of Base, Pet Shop Boys and the like (all on 12"). I'm very happy to be the only customer they will likely ever have who is pleased to pick up an Extended version of a Peter Cetera flop from 1988. I also take a chance on an 80s curiosity that I've never heard of – *Cry Cry Cry* from Two Minds Crack. It proves to be a decent slab of thumping dancy synth-pop. I'm now on the lookout for their lone album.
I have to be honest, though: I don't think they'll be getting a spin on the decks here anytime soon.

## 8 JACARANDA RECORDS

Another institution steeped in the history of the Fab Four, this pub/café hosted gigs by The Silver Beetles from May 1960 and the embryonic act rehearsed in the basement (still used by up-and-coming acts for the same purpose in 2018). A trip downstairs (another basement!) is like stepping back in time, and well worth a detour. This time, the records are upstairs (alongside a vintage recording booth that is still in operation and a tourist attraction in its own right). There's a good mix of Liverpool acts and other second-hand discs, but timing is everything, as the place is packed when I pop by. Spilt beer and record sleeves don't mix…

## 9 JACARANDA RECORDS – PHASE ONE

This sister venue of the pub is balanced between a big live venue out back and dozens of racks of new vinyl out front, where prices are definitely better than you'll likely find on the high street. They steal a trick from there, though, with a loyalty-card programme rewarding regulars with a 20% discount once you've bought enough. The branding is neat (the tote bags are fabulous) and I pick up a couple of records I missed first time round, including the limited-edition peach-scented, peach-coloured soundtrack of *Call Me By Your Name* (this is a family magazine, so see the film if you don't understand the marketing connection). Rather more wholesome (but only just) is a cheap copy of Miley Cyrus's *Younger Now*. I'm really not doing well with this mission to buy The Beatles, am I?

## 10 MUSICAL BOX

Once you've dusted off these more central locations, there are a handful of other shops worth travelling out for if you have time: I'm disappointed I just don't have time for Aintree Vinyl out at Warbreck Moor, Defend Vinyl on Smithdown Road or Skeleton Records across the water. Because this is a day-long expedition (and some open quite late in the morning), I decide to head for one of Merseyside's oldest record emporiums: Musical Box. Based in Tuebrook, in the north of the city, it's been a family-owned operation since the 1950s and, although there used to be a second branch, the West Derby Road seems immune to the challenges of 21st-century retail. There is a good mix of new and second-hand, and manager Tony Quinn, who was born in a room above the shop, thinks the future remains bright, even though he's unsure if his own kids will want to take it on in due course. "People are still bringing stuff in," he tells me. "A vicar dropped off 20 Frank Zappa LPs and wouldn't take a penny for them! They just flew out within the week." I spend a lot of time in the used boxes and am told that I'm not buying the usual sort of stuff, which pleases me no end. Someone needs to rehome a mint copy of En Vogue's debut, after all. Tony's mother also still does shifts in the cash-only shop and there's a homely, curatorial air about the place. The cupboards are packed with boxes of singles and I ask to see one labelled 'The Seekers'. Inside, I find mint copies of all their hits in the pristine, original Columbia sleeves. It's almost magical to find records of that age in this condition and I'm told the discs have likely been there since release. Funds and time prevent me exploring further, but I sense there is some real treasure for 7" collectors here. ●

***Musical Box manager Tony Quinn – who was born in a room above the shop – thinks that the future remains bright***

### Top five

**1 BEATLES FOR SALE**
This perhaps isn't the place for buying Beatles rarities. Consider all the millions of visitors over the years who have picked across the city looking for some sentimental souvenir and you can guarantee a fair bit of it will have been vinyl. More than one dealer supported this view. Other local acts seemed a bit thin on the ground, too, but you'll spot the odd Billy J Kramer, Cilla or Gerry Marsden release. The recently departed Ken Dodd was rather more in evidence (and let's not forget *Tears* was the UK's biggest-selling single in 1965). There are two branches of the Fab4Store at the docks, where the range is wide, even if everything's at the price point you'd expect. The Beatles Shop in Mathew Street has a more interesting mix of specialist and original items, while the Hard Day's Night Shop, nearby, completes the circuit with more mass-market material.

**2 MEET THE BEATLES**
The city's most famous sons are in evidence everywhere, with themed pubs, hotels and more memorials in one form or another than you can imagine. The 2015 statue down by Pier Head is fabulous; The Beatles Story at the docks does a reasonable job of immersing you in some re-imagined sets (The Cavern, Abbey Road, etc); while the Magical Mystery Tour bus takes you all over Merseyside on a two-hour trek around the sites. Mathew Street is worth exploring on foot – don't miss the new statue of Cilla Black along here – and Ron Jones's excellent (and recently updated) *The Beatles' Liverpool* packs in an encyclopedic level of detail about places to see around the city, if you want to go solo. If you do anything, try to grab a slot on one of the four daily tours around the homes of Lennon and McCartney. Places are limited to 15 per tour, so book ahead on nationaltrust.org.uk/beatles-childhood-homes. The 3pm slot often has late availability, but you have to travel out to Speke Hall (near the airport) to join this group.

**3 FERRY CROSS THE MERSEY**
If you're travelling out to Birkenhead, where you'll find the well-regarded Skeleton Records (known locally as Skelly), you may be tempted to take the famous river crossing. It's atmospheric, for sure, but the commuter service actually takes you to Seacombe Wallasey. So, if time isn't on your side and you can't go by car, grab the train with a stop at James Street, near the docks, and at Liverpool Lime Street. You'll find Skeleton Records at 11 Oxton Road, not far from Birkenhead Central.

**4 DOUBLE FANTASY**
The Museum Of Liverpool, situated near Pier Head, is running a great, free exhibition about the life and work of John and Yoko until 22 April 2019. Details are available at liverpoolmuseums.org.uk. A floor below, Tales From The City celebrates Merseyside's LGBQT community with contributions from Holly Johnson and others (running until March 2019). Elsewhere on the docks, you'll find a statue of the late Billy Fury and, just to make sure you've missed nothing out, the British Music Experience is now housed in the Cunard Building, across the road. See britishmusicexperience.com for details.

**5 TICKET TO RIDE**
Planning ahead is going to be vital if you want to get the most out of the city. Music fans could easily spend three or four days here lapping it all up, and that's without doing any record shopping! Visitliverpool.com does a great job of giving you an overview of what's on and you can purchase entry to many attractions here, while theguideliverpool.com offers more granular detail on gigs and short-run events.

# DIGGING FOR VICTORY

Our resident record-shop owner **Mark O'Shaughnessy** has an enlightening encounter with a spiritual wanderer... Then buys his vinyl

Earlier this year, I had cause to stop and take stock of my own 'outlook' on life and music, due to the intervention into my world of somebody who was soooo unusual in *his* outlook that the conversations we had still resonate deeply with me.

It was a fairly mundane, still very chilly Wednesday afternoon last February, there were a few people in the store – nothing major going down – when a tall, skinny, barefooted man (in his late 30s, at a guess, no older) walked up to the counter and introduced himself. "My name is Arzachel, pleased to meet you." I'd already spotted that he didn't have any shoes on, this being a cold February morning, remember? I also quickly tried to remember where I knew that name from, but it escaped me.

Now – we get a lot of 'unusual' people in our central Bath store, mainly because it's in a covered area, and also because record stores just seem to attract most of the world's nutters… He offered me what I can only describe as a tassled camelskin bag and asked me if I was interested in buying his record collection, as he'd heard we paid well for rare prog/psych (we do) and he'd brought a few to give me an idea of what else he had to offer.

At this point, people like this normally produce a bag full of utter rubbish, which we often pay next-to-nothing for and pop straight into the £1 box. However, this was different. In my hand were three of *the* rarest prog/psych LPs I'd ever handled: Sam Apple Pie, The Way We Live and Stack Waddy, each bona-fide rares, each regularly changing hands for £300/£400/£500, each I had never, ever handled before. Wow. He seemed keen for me to visit him at his home. He said there were plenty more records… bring it on!

My companion on this trip to deepest, darkest Wiltshire was Sarah Bishop, who now also works for me in Revival Records. We got to the door and instantly smelt the scent of herbal tea. The door was already open. Inside was Arzachel, sat cross-legged on the floor, incense burning and a huge bong bubbling away to his right. We declined a hit and sat down on the velvet sofa in the corner – I smiled inwardly, because most of my best finds have been from people like this. We chatted for 20 minutes, drank herbal teas together and refused several more tokes.

Looking round the room, we saw little piles of 'stuff' our gracious host had collected over the years: pretty shells, a few acorns he'd foraged, some beautiful glass artefacts that seemed totally in-sync, a little bunch of leaves that had gone brown and brittle in the warmth of his room… just baffling, enchanting and mystifying all at the same time. Sarah and I were completely impressed and even a little in awe of Arzachel and his 'calm' persona.

Now, I guess there are 'special' people out there – people who have insights and visions, who 'see' things others cannot see. I believe Arzachel was one of these people. He told us about his life, his beliefs and his world – his was a thoroughly engaging and totally believable life story. I was totally riveted. He'd already crammed more into his 30-odd years on planet Earth than most people manage in a whole lifetime. Eventually, we got down to it and he said: "Would you like to see my record collection?" In the adjoining room, he pulled back a velvet curtain to reveal three rows of albums – all spine out, but not in any order. Holy shit. What a collection – every Hawkwind, every Gong, every Amon Düül, every Camel, every Caravan, every Tangerine Dream, every Neu!, every Kraftwerk, and so on. It was like a prog/krautrock A to Z, people, just amazing to see these records all in the same place, all in beautiful condition. It was definitely the most extensive prog collection I'd ever laid eyes on.

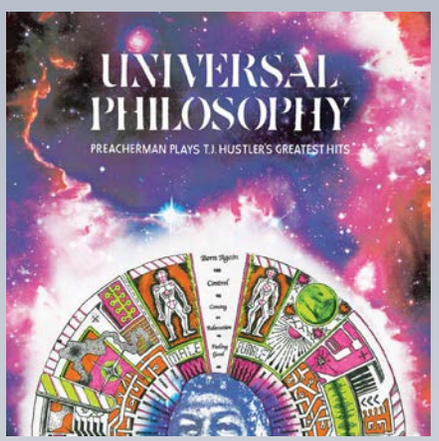
***Arzachel was one of these people. He told us about his life, his beliefs and his world – his was a thoroughly engaging and totally believable life story***

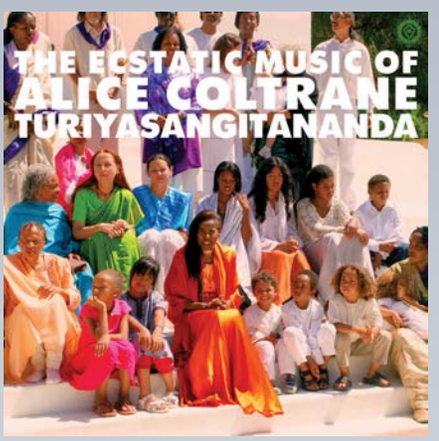
It felt a bit out of place to start discussing money, but it had to be done. I spent a good two hours looking through and then made what I felt to be a very fair offer, which he accepted unquestioningly, and that was that. We then all sat down again and talked away happily for another couple of hours. I still believe this guy was one of the most interesting and idiosyncratic people I had ever met on my record-buying travels – and his collection was totally peerless. Now, where *have* I heard that name before…?! ●

*Mark O'Shaughnessy is the owner of Bath record shop Resolution Records and has been a professional record dealer since 1993*

# Luaka Bop

**Chris Parkin** on how David Byrne's 30-year-old Luaka Bop label has shone the spotlight on talents such as William Onyeabor and Alice Coltrane – and continues to uncover the eclectic…






When David Byrne founded Luaka Bop in 1988, naming it after a packet of Sri Lankan tea he'd recently bought, there was no plan. He just wanted to reissue some overlooked Brazilian music from the 60s Tropicália scene, maybe even a few Cuban compilations. Even without a manifesto, though, Luaka Bop has crafted an enviable identity, from its masonic logo to its niche for unearthing music with amazing stories. Now the label, presided over since the late 80s by Yale Evelev, is telling its most curious tale yet.

In 1979, Tim Jones, performing under the name T.J. Hustler, self-released his now sought-after freaky synth-funk opus *Age Of Individualism*. It earned him only cult status and by day, Jones spent the 80s mending IBM typewriters. By night, though, he continued gigging around Las Vegas, using the Hammond B3 organ he'd modified to play a Moog synth. Taking the name Preacherman, Jones added a wooden puppet to his shows, giving it his old moniker T.J. Hustler, and the two would go off on wild, metaphysical flights of fancy.

After a tip-off from collector and musician Alan Noble, Evelev tracked Jones down in Oakland, where he lives with his centenarian mother, to compile *Universal Philosophy: Preacherman Plays T.J. Hustler's Greatest Hits*. A peculiar collection of outsider new-age funk drawn from old tracks burnt onto CD, Jones and his sidekick get deeply philosophical about everything from the environment to human fallibility. Which all begs the question: what was Jones like to work with?

"He was both very easy and incredibly difficult," Evelev says. "He wasn't worried that some label was going to rip him off, as far as I know; but at the same time, he wouldn't listen to us at all when we suggested he get his organ and T.J. out of storage. Nor did he want to work with us at all to get a keyboard that would sound like the one he used to play."

JONES ADDED A WOODEN PUPPET TO HIS SHOWS, GIVING IT HIS OLD MONIKER T.J. HUSTLER, AND THE TWO WOULD GO OFF ON WILD, METAPHYSICAL FLIGHTS OF FANCY

Luaka Bop have form for backing the right horse, however unknown. They are, remember, the label that unearthed William Onyeabor in 2013, now one of the most notable 'forgotten' artists of all time. They were also responsible for last year's stellar collection of Alice Coltrane's Ashram recordings. After 30 years, they know when a risk is worth it. "Every time you do a record," says Evelev, "you worry that perhaps it isn't going to work; maybe the material isn't really there. We almost always do records that are not familiar to us, so it's a learning experience for us.

"What gives me a kick is if we can change something for the artist that's fulfilling to them," he adds. "Susana Baca and Tom Zé struggled in their countries before we released their music. William Onyeabor didn't struggle, and would never come out and say: 'Oh, it's so nice for my music to be recognised,' but we knew he felt that way." Who knows, perhaps *Universal Philosophy…* will even inspire Jones to do the right thing and rescue his old friend from storage? ●

# The Beatles

## THE BEATLES

DELUXE 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

**APPLE**

How best to improve an album that most people agree is too long at 30 songs? Make it longer, of course. Such a counterintuitive move has come about now that the widely bootlegged *Esher Demos* recorded at George Harrison's Surrey home finally get an official release for *The Beatles*' 50th anniversary. Those 27 demos join a new Giles Martin mix which, like his take on *Sgt. Pepper's…* last year, generally beefs up the original album. Also familiar from last year, if Martin Jr's takes on the acoustic tracks are a tiny bit too bassy, then he undeniably adds bounce to the likes of *Birthday* and *Happiness Is A Warm Gun*. Here, even *Why Don't We Do It In The Road?* becomes menacing, rather than the undercooked slap of the original.

You'll have your own opinions of which of the songs should be dropped from the tracklisting to make *The Beatles* more cohesive – can anyone really justify *The Continuing Story Of Bungalow Bill*? But you'll almost certainly have to do it based on the 2018 vinyl version from now on – since the Anniversary Edition last year, it's been nigh-impossible to find an original mix of *Sgt. Pepper's…* on vinyl, apart from in second-hand shops. As deft as the new version is, it's odd of Apple not to give buyers the choice. The 4LP Deluxe version adds the *Esher Demos*, which sound as clear as could be hoped for. There are 19 songs which were recorded properly for the finished album, offering many fascinating alternative universes. Should *Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da* have stayed rootsy? Is *Piggies* better as an ancient madrigal? How did George Harrison make *While My Guitar Gently Weeps* golden from its surprisingly unpromising beginnings?

*Esher Demos* is rounded off by eight songs that didn't make it to *The Beatles*. An electrifying *Mean Mr. Mustard* is better than the finished kitsch version on *Abbey Road*. There is the unfulfilled promise of how the full band could have handled songs that eventually ended up on solo albums – it may generally be regarded as a classic, but John Lennon's *Jealous Guy* could have been better still had its psychedelic patina been developed under its original guise here of *Child Of Nature*. The same goes for Harrison's *Circles*.

It's frustrating that another aspect of the *Sgt. Pepper's…* box is repeated: the Super Deluxe boxset is unavailable to vinyl purchasers. The Beatles routinely shun download codes with their vinyl releases, so it's too much to hope that fans paying £90 for the 4LP set get a digital copy of *Esher Demos*, let alone access to the additional 53 songs added to the £125 CD/Blu-Ray Super Deluxe box. Which is annoying, as it means there's no chance of getting the mono remaster, the 10-minute take of *Revolution*, the acerbic studio chat, a cover of Elvis' *Baby I Don't Care* and on and on. But let's not carp too much. *Esher Demos* is finally available and, saved from bootleggers, at 50 years old, it's sounding better than it has any right to. Now, what are Apple going to do for *Abbey Road*'s 50th?…

*John Earls*

VERDICT

**9/10**

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

# The Rolling Stones

## BEGGARS BANQUET

50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

**ABKCO**

Having been hammered by The Beatles in the 1967 Psychedelic Joust Of Long Playing Panjandrums, following *Their Satanic Majesties Request* could have finished less resolute talents than The Rolling Stones. Sadly, the aftermath did seem to defeat Brian Jones, who definitively relinquished control of his band to Jagger and Richards over the course of 1968. If Jones is largely absent from *Beggars Banquet*, what he did contribute would prove to be a beautiful finale, especially his elegant slide guitar on *No Expectations*. It's tragic that Jones didn't survive to add to what became the Stones' golden run of records, but at least he helped kickstart it with their first truly golden album.

The Stones may have always been patchy over LPs before, but these 10 songs have no filler. Even the lighter moments which show their age now, such as the vaudeville *Dear Doctor*, had their place at the time, while the bluesy strut of *Parachute Woman* is one of the Stones' all-time great non-singles. And the singles themselves – *Sympathy For The Devil* and *Street Fighting Man* – surely rank among the Top 10 best Stones songs for anyone with functioning ears. *Sympathy For The Devil* is the subject of one of the Anniversary Edition's two fine extras. As the last Stones song to be properly mastered in mono, that version is added as a 12" single, arguably sounding even wilder than its familiar stereo mix.

Also present is a re-press of the flexi disc of nine-minute Mick Jagger interview *From London To Tokyo*, only given away at the time with the Japanese version of the album. The questions from the anonymous record exec conducting the interview are as flimsy as the flexi, but a playful Jagger still performs gamely. The pressing itself, featuring a super-cute cartoon illustration housed in a robust sleeve, is expertly manufactured. Considering the turbulent history between the Stones and ABKCO, at least the label is doing right by the band in its attention to detail with their reissues, if not their royalties.

That level of care continues with Bob Ludwig's remastering, a further upgrade on the already-decent job he did for the album's 35th anniversary in 2003. Few, if any, engineers are better at bringing out the warmth of vintage tapes without diluting the music's energy. In his hands, *Street Fighting Man* and *Stray Cat Blues* leap out of the speakers with all the danger the Stones still had in their 20s. The download codes for the extras are included, too, so you won't need to damage the flexi by putting 2p on the turntable arm to play it if you don't want to.

There's undoubtedly a ruthlessness to the way Jagger and Richards dealt with Jones' flailing frailties, but it could be argued it's that lack of sentimentality that's kept the Stones so efficient and on top for the past 50 years. *Beggars Banquet* marks that changing of the guard, and it's hard to fault this new edition for preserving it so well.

*John Earls*

VERDICT

**9/10**

# Massive Attack
## MEZZANINE
**UMC/VIRGIN EMI**

Released in 1998, and initially titled *Damaged Goods* – after the Gang Of Four album, telling of the New Wave records Robert Del Naja sampled in the record's early stages – *Mezzanine*'s arrival was heralded by *Teardrop*, on which, even with her wraithlike tones, Cocteau Twins' Liz Fraser proved insufficient to overcome the dominant bleak tension. The generous 50 minutes of accompanying tracks, produced by newcomer Neil Davidge – who gave them a grimly futuristic polish – rarely broke this mould. Fraser, for instance, made further attempts to lift the mood, with *Black Milk* far airier, but the increasingly terrifying *Group Four* merely benefited from the disconnect between her voice and the malicious environment. Opener *Angel* throbbed, then pounded, with Horace Andy's sweet vocal swamped by a malevolent, relentless bassline and distorted guitars viciously reinforcing its climaxes. The monotony of the reverb-soaked, dubby *Risingson* was uncomfortably claustrophobic; *Inertia Creeps*' rumbling Balkan rhythms were pierced by unsettling effects, while explosive guitars elevate the thrusting *Dissolved Girl*, halfway through. There were cracks of light, notably the strings-drenched *(Exchange)*, while Mad Professor's spacious mixes – which appear for the first time on this heat-sensitive 3LP package – help. Just don't turn to his blistering version of *Metal Banshee* for relief. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

**8/10**

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

# The Jimi Hendrix Experience
## ELECTRIC LADYLAND
**LEGACY RECORDINGS**

Hendrix's vaultingly ambitious 1968 double album, covered extensively in Issue 19 of *Long Live Vinyl*, was a full realisation of his futuristic vision. This 6LP and Blu-ray 50th anniversary Deluxe Edition comes in a box that finally features Hendrix's preferred cover design – the Linda Eastman photograph of the band and children at the statue of *Alice In Wonderland* in Central Park. Inside, there's an analogue remastering of the album from the original studio masters by Bernie Grundman across two discs, along with an Eddie Kramer-produced 5.1 surround-sound mix – a first for Hendrix's music in the format. *The Early Takes* let us put our ears to the wall and eavesdrop on Jimi recording his *…Ladyland* song ideas to a reel-to-reel tape at New York's Drake Hotel, alongside some great early studio work featuring Buddy Miles, Stephen Stills and Al Kooper. *Jimi Hendrix Experience: Live At The Hollywood Bowl 9/14/68* is a recently discovered, rough-and-ready soundboard recording of a hit-packed performance. The package also includes *At Last… The Beginning*, a 1997 'making of' documentary on Blu-ray, plus a 48-page book of Jimi's handwritten lyrics and notes, and unseen Kramer shots from the sessions, rounding out a reverential, extra-mile tribute offering some genuinely fresh fare. *Owen Bailey*

VERDICT

**9/10**

# Big Brother & The Holding Company

SEX, DOPE & CHEAP THRILLS

**SONY**

Big Brother & The Holding Company finally get their wish 50 years after the fact, as their most successful album, *Cheap Thrills*, reverts to its original title. An intended cover shot of the band sat naked in a hotel room must wait for another day, though. It is, of course, the record that, allied with their performance at the Monterey Pop Festival in 1967, made Janis Joplin a global star. Her scene-stealing vocals remain the main attraction here, although the much-criticised band who were deemed ill-befitting of her talent often bring rough-hewn charm to the album: James Gurley's odd buzzsaw solo on *Ball And Chain* a case in point. This new two-disc vinyl incarnation brings alternate takes to the well-known original; several are previously unreleased. Occasionally indulgent – hell, it was late-60s San Francisco, after all – alongside some filler such as the throwaway *Harry*, gems such as the elegant *Summertime*, evergreen *Piece Of My Heart* and authentic *Turtle Blues* still impress. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

8/10

# Various Artists

JAZZ ON A SUMMER'S DAY

**CHARLY RECORDS**

Although decidedly more understated, the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival and its associated documentary *Jazz On A Summer's Day* was arguably as influential as the 1967 Monterey Pop Festival and Woodstock two years later. Now, 60 years on, this anniversary deluxe edition featuring a hardback book and two 10" discs, plus a CD and DVD of Bert Stern's landmark documentary, does a fine job in capturing a landmark cultural moment. Sets by Miles Davis, Dave Brubeck and Ray Charles unfortunately don't make the cut, but there are still plenty of fine acts to dip into. The Jimmy Giuffre Trio capture the weekend's laid-back vibe via *The Train And The River*; a lo-fi Chuck Berry raucously throws down *Sweet Little Sixteen* and Louis Armstrong's well-honed band raise a smile in an old-timey kinda way with four nailed-on crowd-pleasers. Picks of the bunch, though, are the soulful Big Maybelle and the wonderful Mahalia Jackson – her *Didn't It Rain?* raises the bar to another level. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT

7/10

LONG LIVE VINYL CHOICE

# The Fall

I AM KURIOUS ORANJ

**BEGGARS ARCHIVE**

As is the ever-giving nature and brilliance of The Fall, there will always be albums that, with time, distance, understanding and reappraisal, will gain a new sense of potency in their back catalogue. *I Am Kurious Oranj* was always a brilliant, unexpected and complete statement, but sitting as their 11th album, looking back, it seems to embody a period of The Fall in which pop and experimental music were very much one and the same for them. The twisted sister of *Hip Priest*, *New Big Prinz* remains a monstrously powerful opening track that sets a tone for a record that bounces along with grizzly venom as much as it does infectious funk and groggy grooves. Considering Mark E Smith and his then wife/band partner Brix Smith's relationship was crumbling, along with supposedly rising drug and alcohol use for the frontman, there's a weird cohesion to this record: proving that even amidst swarming chaos, The Fall were still capable of plucking beauty from carnage. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT

9/10

# OMD

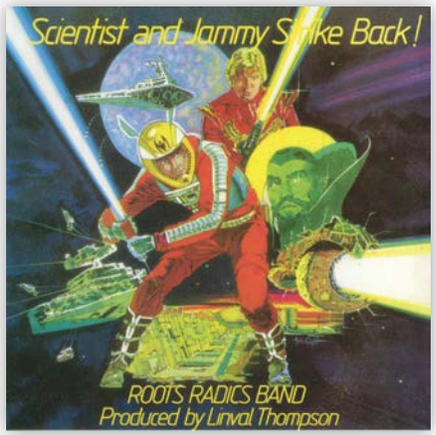
REISSUES

**UNIVERSAL**

That OMD's first four albums arrived between February 1980 and March 1983 – with the first two only eight months apart – was remarkable enough. That they could bang out songs of enviable purity and deceptive simplicity with such ease was even more exceptional. Launched on the back of 1979's Kraftwerk-esque *Electricity*, released by Factory Records, their 1980 debut broke the Top 30, fuelled by *Red Frame/White Light*'s spikier pop and the trembling (re-recorded) *Messages*. *Organisation*, released later that year, delivered their first truly sublime hit, *Enola Gay*; but revealed a darker side on *Statues* and, especially, the stately *Stanlow*. *Architecture & Morality*, however, represented their earliest masterpiece, with the perfectly formed *Joan Of Arc*, *Souvenir* and *Maid Of Orleans...* bedewed with the creeping melancholy – absent only on the perky *Georgia* – which saturated the sparse, soulful *Sealand* and haunting title track. Born of writer's block, meanwhile, 1983's prescient *Dazzle Ships* set them back commercially – but remains fascinating. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

8/10




# Scientist

SCIENTIST AND JAMMY STRIKE BACK!

**MUSIC ON VINYL**

Limited to 750 copies on numbered 180g orange vinyl, this reissue of the 1982 Trojan classic comes in the year the legendary label celebrates its 50th anniversary. While the song titles – *Buck Rogers In The Black Hole*, *Flash Gordon Meets Luke Skywalker* – and Ade Cruft's sleeve design are a playful salute to sci-fi, Linval Thompson's compositions make little concession to the subject on what is an early-80s dub staple. Canyon-deep echo and reverb-drenched snare hits are of course the order of the day from the Roots Radics band, with the King Tubby-mentored pair at the controls at Channel One Studios and Tubby's own Jamaica HQ. One of the best examples in his sizeable catalogue, *...Strike Back!* captures Scientist's innovative production and masterful use of delay, reverb and filter effects. His vocal flickers briefly into focus on the opening *Storming The Death Star*, "sailing sailing" before melting away into an intoxicating spiral of tape delay and rock-steady bass that takes hold into the final notes of the brilliantly titled closer *C-3PO + R2-D2 = The Force*. *Gary Walker*

VERDICT

8/10

# Bronski Beat

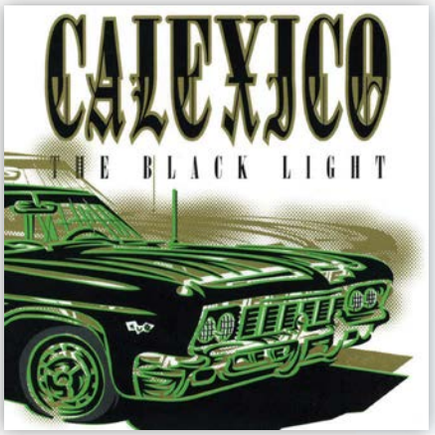
THE AGE OF CONSENT

**LONDON RECORDS**

It's hard to credit, but 34 years ago, Bronski Beat seemed shocking. Jimmy Somerville's conspicuous homosexuality – *Why?* (and thus this debut album) opened with the lines "Contempt in your eyes/ As I turn to kiss his lips" – and their album's artwork, which highlighted global inequalities in the age of consent for gay men, caused conservative blood to boil. But there was no defence against Somerville's thrilling, vulnerable falsetto, whether he was competing with saxophone on *Love And Money*, with (metaphorically, at least) Donna Summer on the Hi-NRG *I Feel Love/Johnny Remember Me*, or religious prejudice on the heartfelt camp of Gershwin's *It Ain't Necessarily So*. But while *Smalltown Boy*'s aching regret justifiably remains their greatest achievement, never underestimate the litany of woes in the agonisingly restrained *Screaming*. This remastered reissue, available as a picture disc or on pink vinyl – with demos and rarities for download – is also worth shouting about. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

8/10




# Calexico

## THE BLACK LIGHT

**CITY SLANG**

Calexico's second album saw the Arizona duo spread their wings and expand their sonic palette, embracing the multi-track possibilities of Tuscon's WaveLab studio and new levels of instrumentation that Joey Burns refers to as "a thrift-store orchestra". Widescreen Spaghetti Westerns and Mariachi brass are joined by shuffling Latin rhythms on evocative desert vignettes such as *The Ride Pt II*, and yearning lap-steel guitar on the six-minute *Missing*. Calexico's sound is a singular one, forged by the unique landscapes of America's South West: a tremulous violin part evokes the haunting sound of a freight-train horn piercing the desert night on the title track: "Out past the Border Patrol/ Whose Thunderbird's no match". Reissued to celebrate the album's 20th anniversary, this 2LP 180g package includes 11 bonus tracks, six of them from 1999's *98 – 99 Road Map*. Of added interest to fans, three mixes of *Minas De Cobre* offer divergent twists on the original's sombre Mariachi grandeur. With Trump threatening to build his wall, these cross-border dispatches have never sounded more apposite. *Gary Walker*

VERDICT

8/10

# Smashing Pumpkins

## SHINY AND OH SO BRIGHT

**NAPALM RECORDS**

Propelled by news that some original band members of Smashing Pumpkins (James Iha and Jimmy Chamberlin) have returned, their 10th studio album feels lined up for a 'return to form' narrative. Sadly, that's not the case. Billy Corgan remains as ambitious and single-minded as ever on the record, chasing his vision for the band, which seems to exist somewhere between rare glimpses of the old spark and its dying embers. The production and craft is pristine, but there's little spunk to the record; the mid-tempo indie numbers often sound like Feeder or the sort of forgettable band that would have been signed in 1995 by a hapless A&R hoping to find the next Pumpkins. Corgan's ear for melody is still there, but when it's filtered through such anaemic songs, it becomes irrelevant. Even with original members back in the band, the Smashing Pumpkins still sound like a band in the midst of an identity crisis, unsure who they are, what they sound like and, ultimately, what they exist for. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT

5/10

# Nile Rodgers & Chic

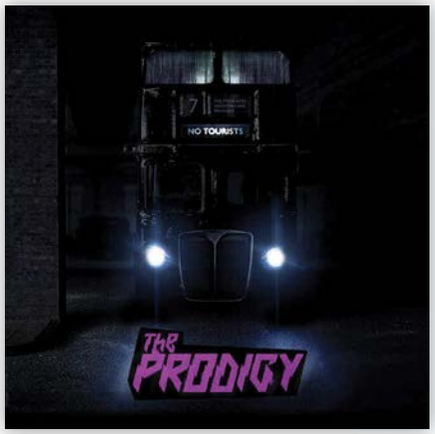
## IT'S ABOUT TIME

**VIRGIN EMI**

Chic have rarely been more namedropped than in the years since Daft Punk reminded everyone how exceptional they were, so *It's About Time*'s attempts to sound relevant feel unnecessarily misguided. Nao may have earned success alongside Disclosure, but her helium-fuelled voice sounds shrill on *Boogie All Night*, and that *Sober* arrives in the same key helps no more than Craig David and Stefflon Don battling rhythms aspiring to – but lacking the discipline of – Janet Jackson's *Control*. Elton John, meanwhile, is harder to find on *Queen* than Wally, his vocals lost amid Emeli Sandé's histrionics, and *State Of Mine (It's About Time)* disintegrates into hotel lobby muzak, though smooth-jazz champion Philippe Saisse is probably responsible. Fortunately, *Do You Wanna Party* overcomes its hackneyed sentiment thanks to LunchMoney Lewis' energetic flow, and *Till The World Falls* offers pure joy. In truth, though, nothing outshines a reworking of *I Want Your Love*, its melody enunciated carefully by Lady Gaga. *Wyndham Wallace*

VERDICT

6/10




## The Prodigy
NO TOURISTS
**BMG RIGHTS MANAGEMENT**

If it's The Prodigy of *Firestarter* and *Smack Your Bitch Up* that gets your adrenalin pumping, here's good news: *No Tourists* appears to have been written with 1997's *The Fat Of The Land* in mind, and while it isn't a complete reversion to their earliest days, it takes no chances keeping loyal fans on board: *Fight Fire With Fire*, for instance – featuring American hip-hoppers Ho99o9 – leaves no doubt as to who the original "trouble starter" was. Aggression levels are therefore dialled up to 11, Liam Howlett's beats landing with force, and 10 rounds prove pretty exhausting… especially the bruising *Champions Of London*, which consists of little more than a brutal drum 'n' bass rhythm, distorted keyboard riff and *Charly*-like amphetamine-fuelled, sped-up voices. Even making it through opening one-two combo *Need Some1* and *Light Up The Sky* takes courage. Don't, however, throw in the towel before Barns Courtney's acid flashbacks on *Give Me A Signal*.
*Wyndham Wallace*

## J Mascis
ELASTIC DAYS
**SUB POP**

By 2018, you know what you're going to get with a new J Mascis record. Be it a Dinosaur Jr album or a solo one, his distinctive-bordering-on-lackadaisical vocal style will mumble away as seemingly endless guitar solos rip through the core of the songs. When in solo mode, this will be accompanied by a great deal of acoustic guitar, with Lou Barlow's trademark bass-clattering nowhere to be heard. His third solo album since 2011 continues in this trend and while it's an endearing, likeable and deeply listenable record, it fails to add anything too new. It's actually when Mascis is at his most stripped-back and softest that this album resonates the most. *Web So Dense* is a beautiful, tender song in which the power of restraint allows his vocals to soak into you. It's business as usual for Mascis, but a welcome offering nonetheless.
*Daniel Dylan Wray*

## Bill Ryder-Jones
YAWN
**DOMINO**

There's a profound sense of subtlety to the work of Bill Ryder-Jones. Over the years, he has quietly been working away, crafting seamlessly melodic, thoughtful, understated songs. His often whispering vocals and minimal guitar parts add to this sense of the subtle, but with every solo record, he continues to hone and evolve. Until he reaches the stage of releasing a record like *Yawn*; the kind of solo record Stephen Malkmus has been threatening to make since Pavement but never quite has. Ryder-Jones stretches many of the tracks out on the album, allowing unwinding, sprawling guitar parts to snake through the clouds of ambience he creates, tonally. There's the occasional crunch and clatter of noise, but it's always controlled and contained, allowing the flow and melody to carry the song forward with grace. Ryder-Jones' career feels a bit like a slow-release drug; a steady, unfurling sense of euphoria that manages to keep on giving while offering the promise of more still to come. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT
8/10

VERDICT
7/10

VERDICT
8/10

# Thom Yorke

SUSPIRIA OST

**XL RECORDINGS**

Given some – if far from all – of Thom Yorke's solo work suffers from the sense it's been sketched rather than fully realised, one might surmise he'd be suited to soundtracks. So it proves, even when the Radiohead mastermind stretches a piece out over six minutes, as with the Teutonic *Volk*, whose evolving synth sounds merge with bursts of jazzy percussion and eerie effects suited to a horror film such as *Suspiria*. There are also *A Choir Of One*'s 14 minutes of otherworldly, voice-like synths, and, amid more mysterious, abstract experiments elsewhere, he investigates choral realms on *Sabbath Incantation*. Most people, though, will gravitate to more traditionally structured work such as the extended *Suspirium Finale*, which thrives on doubling the time the 'single' version gave its ghostly piano, haunting strings and Yorke's beloved falsetto. *Has Ended*'s understated dub is also quietly compelling, while on *Open Again*, he could have been beamed in from beyond the grave. *Wyndham Wallace*

# Art Brut

WHAM! BANG! POW! LET'S ROCK OUT!

**ALCOPOP! RECORDS**

Eddie Argos has taken a break from painting album covers to release the fifth Art Brut album (a mere seven years after the last one). *Wham! Bang! Pow! Let's Rock Out!* is a charming meander through the glorious minds of Argos and co. Look out for the many musical references peppered throughout – from *Blood On The Tracks* to *Ticket To Ride*. During album highlight and new single *Hospital!* Argos muses: "They tried to make me go to rehab and I said/ That's probably a very good idea," penned when he was hospitalised with a near-fatal bout of peritonitis. Despite some serious subject matter – death and a break-up – here we have an upbeat (thank you guitar riffs and brass instruments) and triumphant record which wears its 90s influences on its sleeve. None more so than in *Good Morning Berlin*, where a Blur-esque sound and an unmistakable Englishness shine through in Argos's ode to his adopted city. *Laura Williams*

# David Bowie

GLASTONBURY 2000

**WARNER MUSIC**

A full 29 years after he made his debut at a festival where Michael Eavis was still handing out free milk, Bowie's victory lap in 2000 was a much-heralded triumph. Bowie was happy to play it with a straight bat and roll out the hits on what is now being issued across a three-disc vinyl set. On dramatic opener *Wild Is The Wind*, that trademark vibrato is present and correct alongside a perfect pitch, particularly impressive considering Bowie was struck down by laryngitis earlier that week. The band add gritty rock to the melodic *China Girl*, and *Life On Mars*, led by pianist Mike Garson, is stunning. The so-so drum 'n' bass excursion *Little Wonder* is hidden away between the riff-heavy *Rebel Rebel* and the lithe funk of *Golden Years*. A crunching *Fame* hits the spot, *All The Young Dudes* is a lighters-aloft anthem and the band stretch themselves on *Station To Station*. An encore featuring *Ziggy Stardust* and *"Heroes"* hammers home a landmark return to Pilton's hallowed fields. *Steve Harnell*

VERDICT
7/10

VERDICT
8/10

VERDICT
8/10

# Boygenius

BOYGENIUS

**MATADOR**

Three of the outstanding vocalists of recent times – Lucy Dacus, Phoebe Bridgers and Julien Baker – were thrown together through chance meetings on the touring circuit, and the decision to form a band was a natural one. Each bringing one song and one work in progress into the studio, the resulting six-song EP showcases both their disparate talents and shared experience. Dacus' superbly ragged guitar playing adds grit to the towering riposte *Salt In The Wound*, and the scything honesty on album opener *Bite The Hand* ("I can't love you like you want me to") is unmistakably hers. Baker's soaring, emotive alt-country slow-burner *Stay Down* reaches an anthemic conclusion, while Bridgers' mournful, haunting vocal evokes the American open road on *Me & My Dog* as she pleads: "I want to be emaciated/ I want to hear one song without thinking of you". All three voices combine to stunning effect on tender closer *Ketchum, ID*, Baker observing: "Being in love is the same as being alone". A trio who prove to be as great as the sum of their parts; let's hope a full album is in the offing. *Gary Walker*

VERDICT

9/10

# Audiobooks

NOW! (IN A MINUTE)

**HEAVENLY RECORDINGS**

The debut album from London duo David Wrench and Evangeline Ling is an oddball journey through wonky pop, squelching synths and bizarre lyrics that combine to form an esoteric, eccentric but endearing collection of songs. Occasionally, it feels more like scattered ideas collected and thrown together – experiment-like – rather than a complete album release. But this chaotic, volatile mix of hissing beats, echo-soaked vocals and synthesiser parts feels emblematic of the project itself. Of their early sessions, the pair say they never worked for more than one hour on a track. This fast-paced explosion of ideas and throwing wild sounds together to see what sticks is ultimately what makes the album such a pleasingly unpredictable listen. It ricochets between genres restlessly – the sugary pop of *Hot Salt* mutates into the twisted funk of *Dance Your Life Away*, while the bonkers *Dealing With Hoarders* defies categorisation altogether – a little like this album. *Daniel Dylan Wray*

VERDICT

7/10

# B.E.D

BAXTER DURY, ÉTIENNE DE CRÉCY AND DELILAH HOLLIDAY

**HEAVENLY RECORDINGS**

There are albums that seem to sneak out with a slight air of suggesting you shouldn't make too much of this, it's a between-things thing. Certainly, something of that vibe surrounds the release of *B.E.D*. A cursory listen does little to dispel this idea, as Dury intones over minimalistic old-school hip-hop beats provided by French producer de Crécy. Initially at least, only the vocals of Skinny Girl Diet's Holliday seem to offer any warmth or texture. Yet listen again, and an altogether stranger and more subtle album starts to emerge; a song cycle offering, in Dury's own words, a "confessional narrative" where it's never quite clear what the singer might have done – although Paris and, at a guess, a doomed romance are heavily involved. Yet for all that it evokes seediness, regret and resignation, *B.E.D* never makes you want to lie down in despair, principally because Dury's wordplay (he's especially good at list songs) lightens the atmosphere. *Jonathan Wright*

VERDICT

8/10

## The Soundtrack Of Our Lives
BEHIND THE MUSIC
**MUSIC ON VINYL**

This 180g gold 2LP pressing, limited to 1,500 copies, of the cult Swedish indie band's breakthrough third album is a real treat for fans. Hailed at the time by Noel Gallagher as "the best album of the past six years", the British-invasion influences are worn proudly as hefty nods are offered to the Stones, Pink Floyd and The Who. A welcome revisiting of an underappreciated end-of-the-century band.

## Ed Harcourt
BEYOND THE END
**POINT OF DEPARTURE**

An eighth solo album and first fully instrumental outing from the former Mercury Prize nominee represents a stepping back from the frenzied noise of modern-day life. Harcourt conjures a meditative bliss from his 1910 Hopkinson Baby Grand piano, backed by wife Gita Langley's violin playing. Such an articulate songwriter, he reveals new depths to his work without uttering a word.

## Ty Segall
FUDGE SANDWICH
**IN THE RED**

Following his filthy, fuzzy cover of Hot Chocolate's *Every 1's A Winner* on January's excellent *Freedom's Goblin* album, the prolific Segall treats us to a full collection of versions of the songs he loves. Among the most radical reinterpretations are a grungy take on John Lennon's *Isolation* and a buzzsaw assault on Funkadelic's *Hit It And Quit It*. Further evidence of a restless genius.

## Bert Jansch
JUST A SIMPLE SOUL
**BMG**

With liner notes from compiler Bernard Butler – one of many who fell under the spell of late fingerpicking maestro and folk icon Bert Jansch – this is the artist's first full-career retrospective, spanning 27 tracks over two 180g discs (there are 39 on the CD). From remastered early classics (*Angie* and *Needle Of Death*) on, this is a melancholy dose of superior yet soulful musicianship.

## Vessel
QUEEN OF GOLDEN DOGS
**TRI ANGLE**

Bristol electronic producer Vessel's third LP foregrounds an "infatuation" with chamber music, and is staggeringly ambitious. Classical instruments and voices, electronic tropes and squalling dissonance mutate to build an intense experience, culminating in centrepiece *Paplu Love That Moves The Sun* – its euphoric skewed electronics and chopped samples worm, Aphex-like, into the mind.

## Ryley Walker
THE LILLYWHITE SESSIONS
**DEAD OCEANS**

For Chicago experimentalist Ryley Walker, the Dave Matthews Band has apparently been a guilty secret… until now, as he's re-imagined the whole of the band's confessional, initially abandoned *Lilllywhite Sessions* from 2001 and channelled it through his own jazz-inflected filter. It's an unhinged ride that proves Walker is as idiosyncratic an interpreter as he is a creator.

## Public Memory
DEMOLITION
**FELTE**

Public Memory is Robert Toher, previously of ERAAS and Apse. Here, on his second full-length, Toher spins a mesmerising web of trip-hop beats, growling Korg synths, tape delay and ghostly vocals across eight tracks of supernatural unease that evokes Atoms For Peace and Geoff Barrow's BEAK>. "I set out to make a larger, more widescreen album," says Toher. Mission accomplished.

## a-tota-so
BUTTONPUSHER & CIRCUIT SWEET
**LONELY VOYAGE RECORDS**

Though they label themselves as a math rock/grunge outfit, one listen to a-tota-so's debut proves that's a disservice. Aficionados of the genre will welcome the many intricate layers that flow through its nine tracks, yet a-tota-so's ability to blend other elements so effortlessly helps keep things fresh. It's a testament to their self-restraint, in a genre that can veer off into self-indulgence.

## Dan Mangan
MORE OR LESS
**CITY SLANG**

Juno-winning Canadian songwriter Dan Mangan dazzled us with *Club Meds,* his fourth album, with backing band Blacksmith. Here, he's in more stripped-back form on a record that tackles the advance of age and the troubles of raising a family in these uncertain times, with endearing honesty. Lead single *Troubled Mind* is an exceptional, galloping piece that probes his existential fear.

LONG LIVE VINYL

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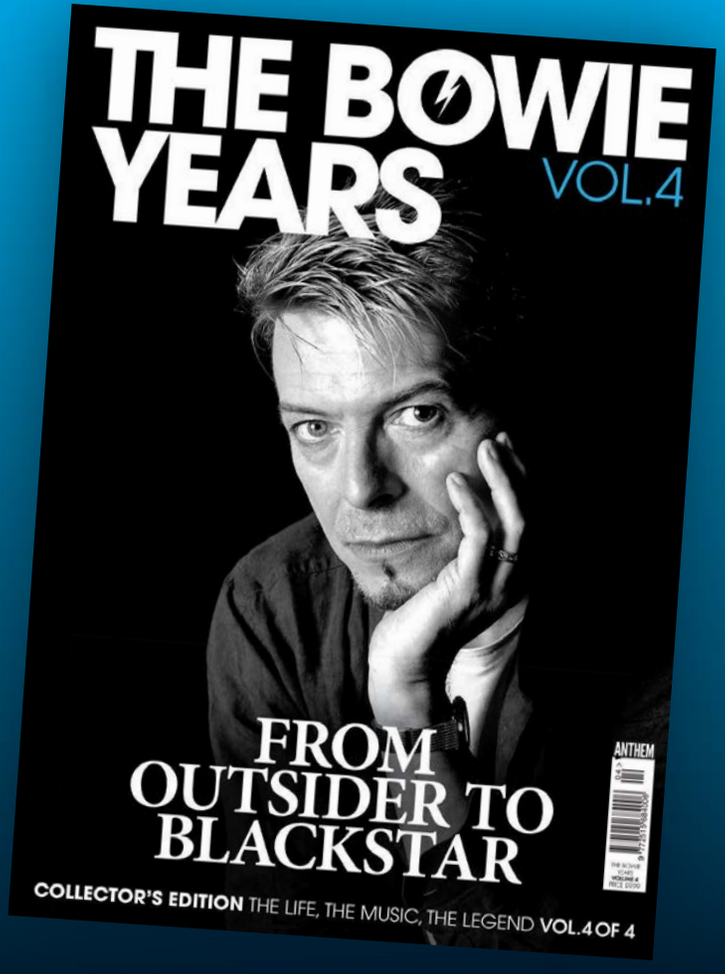


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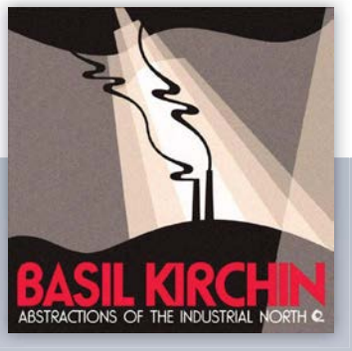
Genre Hopping

# Library music

Library music is enjoying a vinyl renaissance, but was nearly left to languish in the vaults forever. Don't burn down the library until you've heard all the music, says **Chris Parkin**…




If you're a fan of schlocky 70s horror films – or indeed, you've ever turned on a TV – then you will have heard library music. These are songs or incidental tracks composed for TV or film to capture a mood or soundtrack an activity, thus avoiding the costs of proper live scores, and before digital software, library music was essential. *Grandstand*, *Countdown*, *Grange Hill*… they all featured it. And pioneering artists such as Ennio Morricone and Delia Derbyshire began their careers making it.

Because it's functional above all else, its creators didn't get much attention, even if their songs reached more people than many hit singles. And when studios and labels destroyed many of their recordings in the switch to digital, the story of library music was nearly lost forever.

The allure for collectors is obvious, then: rare vintage music pressed to vinyl, for the benefit of TV studios and housed in simple, iconic sleeves with matching spines; tracks performed by many of the same musicians; and music that is by turns funky, terrifying, silly, and wildly experimental. Artists on Ghostbox and bands such as Broadcast and Public Service Broadcasting have been influenced by the music; hip-hop and pop producers continue to sample it, and collecting obsessives have helped revive popular interest in the 'genre'. The British Library recently hosted a celebration of library-music purveyors KPM, and Texan collector David Hollander has written an in-depth book about the subject for Anthology Records called *Unusual Sounds: The Hidden History Of Library Music*.

WHEN STUDIOS AND LABELS DESTROYED MANY OF THEIR RECORDINGS IN THE SWITCH TO DIGITAL, THE STORY OF LIBRARY MUSIC WAS NEARLY LOST FOREVER

To accompany it, Anthology has also released a kind of 'Library Music: Greatest Hits' compilation of the same name. The record features tracks by the key library-music players of the 60s and 70s golden era, including Joel Vandroogenbroeck, the founding member of Belgian 'krautrock' band Brainticket, KPM stars Keith Mansfield and John Cameron, who scored *Kes* and worked with Bobbie Gentry, plus composers Janko Nilović and Stefano Torossi.

But it's Be With Records who have really stepped up the library-music revival. They're reissuing 10 records from the KPM 1000 Series and Themes International Music, plus a new album from two of KPM's chief composers, Brian Bennett and Alan Hawkshaw (the man who created the *Grange Hill* theme and also played keyboard on *Bowie At The Beeb)*. Alan Parker, David Snell and the rest of the KPM All Stars feature across the archival series, which runs the gamut from haunting, folkish moodscapes to space funk, Balearic-like ambient and John Cage-inspired flights of minimalism.

Of course, Trunk Records have been dabbling in this world for over a decade. The label dug up music from the UK's late godfather of ambient Basil Kirchin back in 2005, with *Abstractions Of The Industrial North*, a strange melancholy collection of hypnotic film music. Another Trunk essential, from 2008, is *The John Baker Tapes*, which revisits the playfully bonkers, early electronic experiments of the tape-manipulating BBC Radiophonic Workshop wiz. ●

# DREAM MACHINES

## AUDIO RESEARCH REFERENCE 160M

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No other amp is built like it, looks like it, or sounds like it, says Audio Research. **Paul Rigby** introduces you to the ultra-high-end Reference 160M power amplifier…

**1 TOP VALVES**
*The 160M has four KT150 valves – widely considered to be the finest output valve, owing to its combination of power and finesse – and two 6H30 driver valves*

**2 LOVELY METER**
*The stunning industrial design has a large front-panel window, revealing the KT150 valves, and doubles as an illuminated power meter due to its dual-layer construction*

After two years in development, the new, high-end Acoustic Research Reference 160M (REF160M) Monoblock Power Amplifier features a refined audio topology that looks the business.

Based on valve technology, it is switchable from Ultralinear to Triode operation and back again, to give you different sound styles.

The REF160M includes a sculpted cover with an integrated fan to cool the heat generated by the six valves. Solid-state power regulation has been chosen to provide increased efficiency and reliability.

**3 TAKE CONTROL**
*You can control the amplifier via this neat four-button interface*

2
0.0015
0.015
0.15
1.5
15
150
ULTRALINEAR MODE
CAUTION
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HIGH DEFINITION
V1
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V3
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METER LIGHT
TUBE MONITOR
ULTRALINEAR TRIODE
3

# NAD c 558
## TWO-SPEED BELT-DRIVEN TURNTABLE

£449 *nadelectronics.com*

NAD are a fixture in the hi-fi world, but they're traditionally known more for their amps than turntables. **Paul Rigby** puts the C 558 through its paces and notes some familiar features…

Though not a company exactly reknowned for their turntable production, NAD's latest deck looks clean and stylish in a graphite-coloured, curvy-cornered sort of way.

The two-speed, belt-driven turntable sports a built-in tonearm with a 9" straight tube featuring VTF and Azimuth adjustments. The same tonearm includes a built-in headshell sporting a finger lift. Hanging off the end of that is a very nice Ortofon OM 10 cartridge.

The CNC-machined, MDF plinth supports an included dust cover, made from a non-resonant Perspex with a counter-sprung hinge design that allows the cover to remain in almost any intermediate position, from open to closed.

Measuring 435x340x125mm and weighing in at 5.5kg, this turntable is not aimed at lifestyle users, but those aiming for sound quality. There's no automatic operation, no built-in USB ports, no built-in phono amps… Supporting your records is a glass platter that gives the turntable a slightly Rega-esque look. That sits upon a sub-platter that holds the belt.

**The C 558 incorporates a number of features based on Pro-Ject's components**

The motor and belt are operated by a rocker switch that lies under the front-left portion of the plinth.

Around the back are the usual RCA outputs, plus an earth screw, as well as a socket for a wall-wart power supply.

That's the rundown of the turntable, but that's far from the whole picture. Understandably, because NAD are not known primarily as a turntable outfit and don't necessarily have years of experience in researching, developing and building turntables of their own, the company has had to go shopping. And in this case, they've ended up on Pro-Ject's doorstep, in Austria.

## DIFFERENT STROKES

So what we have here is, in effect, a Pro-Ject-like turntable. Actually, I should be more specific – this is a turntable consisting of Pro-Ject parts. It's not a rebadge of a standard Pro-Ject turntable.

Looking over the final build, though, the choice of parts by NAD – and this is a NAD-governed design – is pretty decent.

Examining more closely, it appears NAD have taken a plinth and motor from a Pro-Ject Debut turntable, added rounded corners, tweaked the finish and then added an arm from an RPM-1 model. The core of the arm is based upon the same model used for the RPM-1, right down to the anti-skate control, but the NAD's arm tube is straight, differing from the RPM-1's S-shaped model, while the NAD's headshell is also different.

I am tremendously intrigued to see a Rega-like glass platter above the plinth. This is similar to a former Pro-Ject accessory product. It was used, for many years, as an upgrade for older designs. Known as Glass-IT, the platter offered a sonic improvement on older models.

I was also interested to see the use of the aforementioned Ortofon OM 10, a cartridge that Pro-Ject use on their £300-£400 turntable designs.

I listen to high-energy jazz from Joe Jackson and full-blown Beatles parodies from The Rutles and notice, with the jazz material, that the NAD sounds full of life, with an animated midrange that provides texture over the entire soundstage – with enough insight into the brass section to signal to the ear there is a group of instruments playing here, not just a shapeless noise. During the rock track, percussion is crisp and powerful, with enough impact to maintain the pace of this lively piece; while cymbal hits allow the treble to extend the reverb admirably. There's an excellent bass response from the C 558, too.

That said, for me, the OM 10 cartridge would be the first component in line for an upgrade. Grab a Goldring E3 (£90) and fit that to the NAD when you can, to make the most of the turntable's basic design.

## IN SHORT

The NAD C 558 sounds good out of the box and its performance improves further when you invest in an improved cartridge to hang off the end of its tonearm. It goes without saying that all of the Pro-Ject parts used in the NAD's design are good-quality items in their own right, but the unique NAD recipe put together for the C 558 certainly provides an open, clear and musical performance. ●

## VERDICT

**PROS**

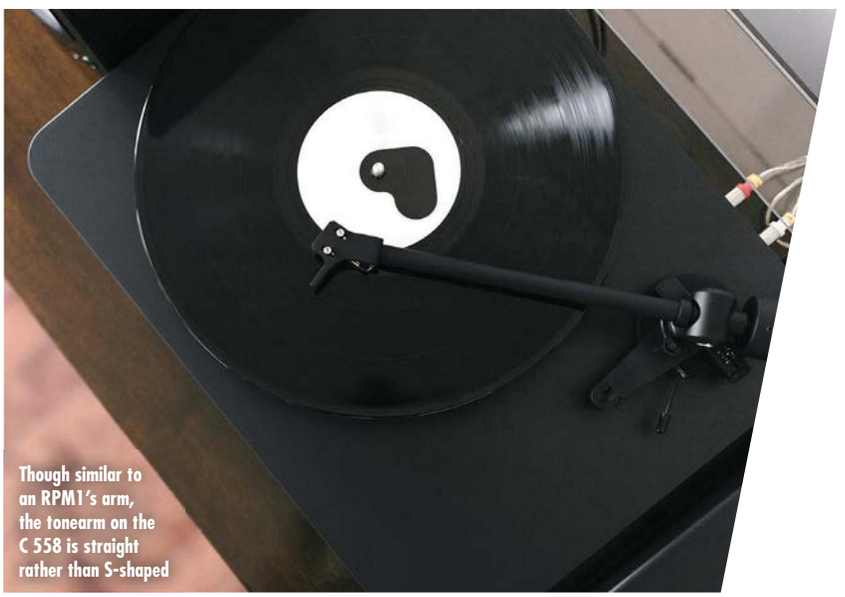
MIDRANGE DETAIL
LOW NOISE
BASS PRESENCE
INTRIGUING DESIGN

**CONS**

THE CARTRIDGE

**SCORE**
**29/33⅓**

THE NAD SOUNDS FULL OF LIFE, WITH AN ANIMATED MIDRANGE THAT PROVIDES TEXTURE OVER THE ENTIRE SOUNDSTAGE



Though similar to an RPM1's arm, the tonearm on the C 558 is straight rather than S-shaped

# STST MOTUS II

## DIRECT-DRIVE TURNTABLE WITH SEPARATE SUB-CHASSIS

MOTUS II £6,399; VERTEX TONEARM £3,399; ETSURO URUSHI CARTRIDGE £5,995 *www.puresound.info*

This turntable from German manufacturer STST is a minimalist design with an ingenious approach to direct drive. **Paul Rigby** finds out more…

All the way from Germany, STST has been up and running since 1985, at the hands of Stefan Strohmetz. The company makes two turntables, the Motus and Motus II, using a direct-drive motor that has been created in-house.

Although run on a similar drive system, the two turntables differ in how the decks are isolated. The basic Motus is a 'fixed' design, whereas the Motus II has the motor and tonearm base mounted on a separate sub-chassis, which is carried on a fully sprung suspension system. Hence the Motus II is the more advanced of the pair; and the design that, as you would expect, offers the lower-noise performance.

The Motus II can be supplied with a variety of wood-veneered plinths, with a choice of matching or contrasting top plates. As such, the turntable looks meaty and strong and, indeed, that's what it is. The Motus II is quite a robust design, minimalistic and clean in its lines.

The direct-drive system featured inside the Motus II is an intriguing one. We are so used to associating direct-drive motors with the likes of Technics models and other turntables out there that are allied to the DJ cause. As such, most turntables that are used as DJ tools employ a direct-drive system that is based on heaps of power. This power enables the platter to run up to speed in a fraction of a second: very useful when you have a complex nightclub set planned and you require reliability and instant response.

For audiophiles, though, the turntable is a sonic source, not a DJ tool – and so the instant direct-drive power is not

THE UPPER FREQUENCIES ARE WELL-BEHAVED AND SOPHISTICATED, BUT STILL RETAINING A BASS GRUNT, WHEN REQUIRED

required. Now, of course, DJ-style direct-drive turntables are often used in home hi-fi set-ups and a Technics turntable can be tweaked to sound very nice indeed. The issue, though, is that massive power boost that spins that platter.

What happens is that the high energy used to drive the platter has to go somewhere, and it's the platter that it normally occupies. This noise spills around and interferes with the cartridge, masking detail. The better your system, the more obvious this issue becomes. This is why STST have created a two-speed direct-drive motor that operates via low torque.

The featured high-density platter helps here, because of its built-in high inertia. Hence, a lot of the inherent direct-drive sonic issues should not be present in the Motus II. The rocker switch for that motor, incidentally, is hidden under the front edge of the plinth.

STST also manufactures a tonearm called the Vertex, which is available at 9", 10" or 12" length. The Motus can be supplied in a larger plinth, in order to accommodate 12" tonearms. The Motus II is generally supplied to take 9" and 10" tonearms, and it was the 9" that I reviewed.

To complete the system, I sourced an Etsuro Urushi moving-coil cartridge from Japan via the Excel Sound Corporation: you may know them from encountering their lower-cost Hana cartridges.

As with the NAD C 558 reviewed on the preceding pages, I listen to high-energy jazz from Joe Jackson and Beatles parodies from The Rutles and I note how the upper frequencies are well-behaved and sophisticated, but still retaining a bass grunt, when required. There is also an impressive precision on offer here, no doubt aided by the direct-drive basis of the turntable that also helps to provide a comforting reliability to the presentation as a whole.

Jazz-based piano playing has a calm, naturalistic yet easy-going flow, while the lead vocal remains lean. Meanwhile, the rock track offers a superb degree of midrange insight with a beautiful reading of the lead vocal, along with strong and forceful bass.

**IN SHORT**

The Motus II turntable patrols across every single frequency, never allowing a wayward note nor a wobbling crescendo to encroach upon it. Emotion might not be too high up in terms of its sonic priorities, but accuracy and a meticulous application to detail certainly is – music is transcribed diligently, with perfect accuracy, but also with an easy, unhurried nature. ●

**VERDICT**

| PROS | CONS |
|---|---|
| FOCUSED PRESENTATION | NOTHING |
| FREQUENCY DISCIPLINE | |
| DETAIL | |
| BASS POWER | |

**SCORE**

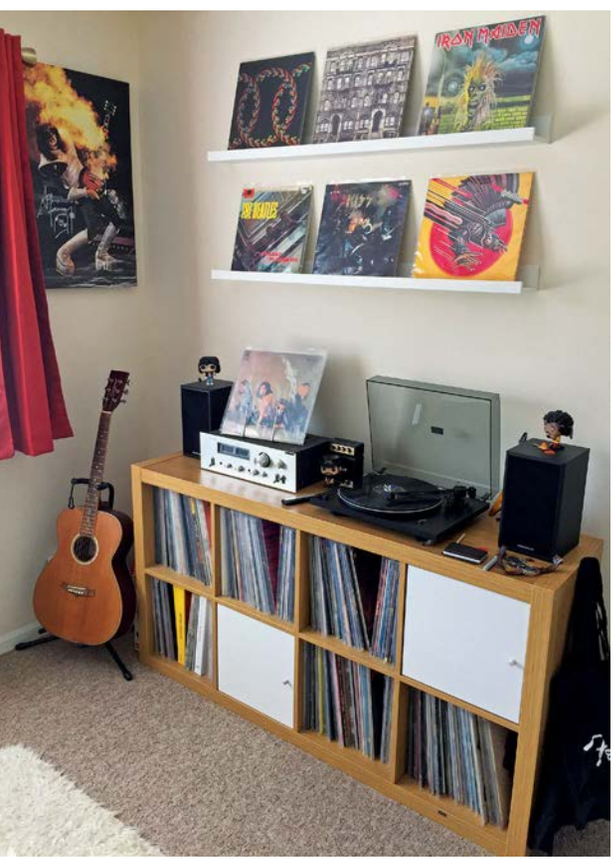
**30/33⅓**

# The Vinylist
# BARRY HASSAN

To be in with a chance of seeing your record collection in *Long Live Vinyl*, email your details and a picture to gary.walker@anthem-publishing.com

Quality not quantity is the watchword for Northern Irish collector **Barry Hassan,** whose record collection began with 90s indie, but branched out into classic and hard rock…

**What was the first record you bought?**
"In 1994, I was eight years old and grew up in the north west of Northern Ireland. There was pretty much only one record shop in the city at that time, and it was called Sounds Around. I remember regularly going in as a kid; I had just really started getting into music and *Definitely Maybe* by Oasis had just been released. It was on display on the wall as a new release, and that's the first one I bought with pocket money. It's still around, even if that great shop is not."




**Which artists and genres are you most interested in?**
"I think a lot of the stuff you first listen to sticks with you, so for me, that'd be The Beatles and a lot of 90s indie. But since the late 90s, I've been more swayed towards classic/hard rock and heavy metal. That's what I try to collect these days, as well as some classic punk and modern rock. Sabbath, Judas Priest, KISS, Alice Cooper, Zeppelin, AC/DC, Scorpions, Ramones – all the greats! I have their original-pressing repertoire. My tastes vary wildly… basically, anything but jazz!"

**How many records do you have?**
"It goes against the very basis of being a collector, but I try to keep a modest collection. At one point, I decided to only collect a specific genre, but that quickly became a thing of the past! Currently, I have around 300 LPs; at most, it's been around 500. I have a small gathering of 7" singles of some of my favourite songs. When it starts to get a bit unwieldy, I tend to swap out a few less-sought-after records for one of my Grails. If I had more room, I'd have more records!"

**What's the most valuable record in your collection?**
"It used to be some Vertigo-swirl Sabbath pressings, but they went the way of Discogs a while back. The most valuable record monetary-wise in my collection I believe is a Sun Kil Moon one, *Among The Leaves*, on blue vinyl. I have their whole back catalogue – they're usually short-run and quite popular with collectors. Some early Dylan and Beatles pressings are in there, too. The most valuable to me, though, sits framed in our living room, the 7" single of *Breathless* by Nick Cave – it was the first dance at our wedding."

**What's the Holy Grail record that you'd most like to own?**
"I've had quite a few over the years and it changes often! For a long time, it was the first two Gomez LPs, but this was before they were reissued. Then it was *The Boatman's Call* by Nick Cave. There usually isn't a problem finding some of the metal and hard-rock LPs I want, they usually have good prices, too. However, my current Grail is Ozzy Osbourne's *No More Tears* – it's got some wildly varying prices on the market. It's definitely one that deserves a reissue and is actually some of his best solo work."

**What's your listening setup?**
"I have a Pro-Ject Essential turntable – the first one, I don't think they make them anymore. I bought that with some scratch-card winnings, actually! That goes through an old Sanyo amplifier from the 70s, which belonged to my wife's grandmother – a DCA 30. That combination has a great warmth to it and suits a lot of the classic and hard-rock LPs I own. That all goes through some no-name hi-fi speakers from the 70s; it's a mash-up of a setup but sounds great!" ●

# Simon & Garfunkel

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GREATEST HITS

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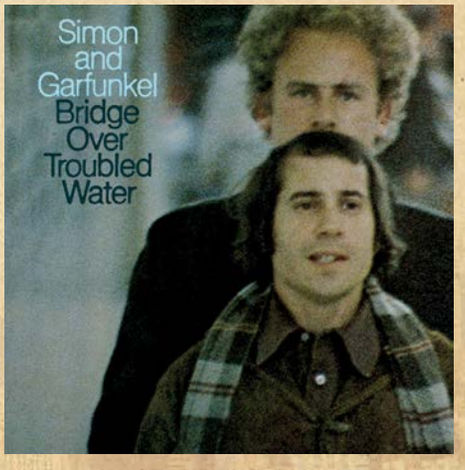
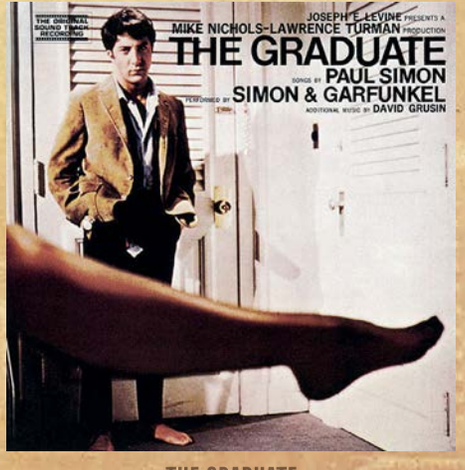
SOUNDS OF SILENCE

PARSLEY, SAGE, ROSEMARY AND THYME

BOOKENDS




BRIDGE OVER ROUBLED WATER

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# e.One
## by bel canto

*"....trust your ears, this is one of the most confident-sounding, myriad-cartridge-accommodating phono amps for the money."*
- Ken Kessler

Bel Canto e.One PHONO Review
Hi-Fi News June 2018

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